



ANNUAL REPORT 2022



PRESIDENT'S INTRODUCTION

Important Progress

In 2021 LFC entered its second decade and our aim of strengthening the local food system was again pursued in many diverse ways. The LFC Committee is pleased to present some of our 2021-22 achievements in this Annual Report.

From its early days, LFC's dream has been to establish an urban farm. Five years ago, that dream was formalised as our number one strategic priority. Progress has been slow, but progress is being made. Could it be that the first food is grown at Eltham's urban farm before our next Annual Report is published? We certainly hope so.

In common with most individuals and organisations, COVID-19 had a big impact. The good news was that our farmers' market continued to operate through lockdowns and trading was strong. More broadly, COVID-19 has proven to be a challenge for community organisations such as ours. Our key purpose is to "Connect" which is contrary to the pandemic response of keeping people apart.

Many traditional LFC activities such as garden tours, workshops, talks, and social events had to be abandoned. Face-to-face meeting were replaced with on-line ones.

For a while, we congratulated ourselves on what seemed a seamless migration to on-line meetings and the apparent time efficiencies that they provided. But the additional vitality and creativity of connecting in-person was missed.

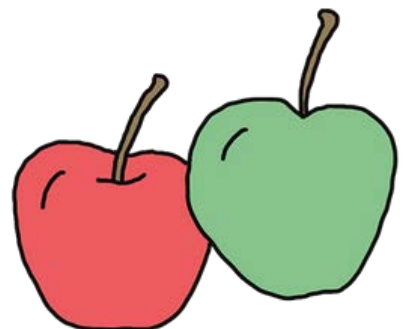
Community organisations continue to suffer from "long-COVID". Over two years of lockdowns community involvement and volunteering have waned, and it will likely take some time to rediscover the old normal.

Our focus in 2022 will continue to be making Fabbro's Farm a reality. It is a unique opportunity to meet all manner of community benefits around health, environment, climate change and education.



CHRIS CHAPPLE

President



Front cover: Artwork representing Fabbro's Farm. Painted by Eltham High School students under the supervision of local artist Felicity Gordon.

THANK YOU FOR CONNECTING

Our Fantastic Network

ONE PLUS ONE = 11

Local Food Connect's purpose is to strengthen the community's ability to produce food locally whether at home or commercially. We believe that connecting the "interested parties" can offer far more capability to achieve our purpose than individuals alone.

THANK YOU

- LFC Members
- Fabbro Interest Group
- Fabbro Reference Panel
- Newsletter Readers
- Eltham Farmers' Market Shoppers
- Social Media Followers
- Community Partners

And **special thanks to Guy Palmer** who continues to make an outstanding contribution editing the LFC Newsletter and maintaining the LFC and Eltham Farmers' Market websites.

Thank you everyone, for supporting our mission of achieving a healthy, local, sustainable food system for our community.

Illustrations: The drawings used in this report were created by Angharad Neal-Williams

THANK YOU TO OUR COMMITTEE

Local Food Connect has been served by a dedicated and active committee during the year who have achieved much in the less-than-ideal circumstances that COVID-19 presented.

Our 2021-22 Committee were:

Chris Chapple - President
Helen Simpson - Secretary
Dan Milne - Treasurer
Paul Gale-Baker
Ann Hague
David Hicks
Fay Loveland

Paul Gale-Baker retires at this year's meeting. Paul has been a busy man across a number of local sustainability groups for many years, and LFC has been fortunate to have his counsel, connections and contributions at our committee discussions. Thank you, Paul.



FABBRO'S FARM

A Community Farm gets a little closer

Considerable progress has been made towards establishing a community farm at the Fabbro's Farm site in Bell St, Eltham:

- A very knowledgeable reference group has been established.
- We have undertaken several study trips to community & private farms.
- A Vision, Mission & Values statement has been developed.

Following on from our presentation to Nillumbik Councilors last year, Council undertook their own feasibility study. This was completed in June.

Since that time, we have hosted Nillumbik Mayor, Cr Frances Eyre and our Ward Councilor, Cr Geoff Paine on a visit to Joe's Market Garden in Coburg. Joe's is part of CERES and illustrates many similarities to the concept we have for a community farm in Eltham.

Pictures below from our visit to Joe's Market Garden in Coburg.

OUR VISION

"Fabbro's Farm is a self-funding, working farm, serving, inspiring and educating our local community by growing and distributing fresh, high quality organic fruit and vegetables in a way that develops resilience and healthy soils for the future."

We very much appreciate the support of our Ward Councilor Cr Paine who is:

"Actively pursuing the idea of a self-sustaining, food-producing urban farm on Fabbro's Field, with both tangible and intangible benefits to the community in terms of producing local healthy food, community connection, place activation and mental health benefits."

The optimists amongst us feel that we may have something growing on the farm before another year passes!



ELTHAM FARMERS' MARKET

Our farmers' market is among the best in Victoria

COVID-19 was Good for Business!

The pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in the global food supply chain, elevating the community's appreciation of the importance of local produce and health concerns encouraged people to shop outside in the fresh air.

Time saved from not commuting could be applied to preparing healthy meals and the weekly market visit was cited by many as playing an important role in their mental wellbeing.

Market attendance in the 2021-22 financial year averaged over 2,000 each week.

While farmers' market trading was strong during the pandemic, we didn't mourn the passing of COVID-19 restrictions. Managing and implementing frequently changing Government directives was challenging. Emotions often ran high with both supporters and detractors of government policy. Happily, it seemed that the majority considered that we managed the issues well.



With lockdowns over it has been wonderful to have musicians back. From Spanish guitarists to jazz quartets and community choirs, entertainers enhance the atmosphere of our market and make it a wonderful place to be.

Financially the market is currently challenged by a number of increased costs and some adjustments will likely be made in the coming year so that the market continues to make a positive contribution to Local Food Connect's projects that strengthen our local food system.



MARKET EXTRAS - 1

The market helps us connect our community

We helped Banyule & Nillumbik Councils and State Government consult with the community.



We joined the fight against fruit fly..



We were thrilled to host a visit by the Agriculture Minister (centre). (Unfortunately, The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas was the Health Minister within the week!)

MARKET EXTRAS - 2

Supports local community groups

We hosted several community groups, with regular appearances by NERP and The Monty Hub...



Our Food Swap is held on each 4th Sunday. It is a great success in bringing our home growers together to swap their excess (and to chat a lot!)



Generally the food swappers bring more produce than they take so there is always extra to giveaway to surprised market goers. Thanks to our dedicated swappers including Bev Robertson, Margaret Turner, Pam Jenkins, Ann Hague, Wendy Myers and Fay Loveland, who welcome people, keep it all running and pack up afterwards.

MARKET EXTRAS - 3

The market provides opportunities to increase awareness of food system issues.

We ran a colouring competition to highlight the vital role bees play in our food system.
Congratulations Leo.



We supported Urban Agriculture Month with a competition that highlighted Food Miles.

MARKET EXTRAS - 4

The market entertainment program makes the market an important social hub.

Blue Tango (Lynne & Dave) are an acoustic duo who have played often at the market.



*Thornbury based choir
- All Of Us*

Our local street entertainer, acrobat and globe trotting clown - Simon Wright.



NEXT GEN FARMERS

It is important to encourage new generations of farmers

Eltham High School Farm Tour

In May we facilitated a very successful farm visit for Eltham High School vocational students.

The hosts were Warren & Isabella of Sugarloaf Farm in Strathewen.

Sugarloaf Farm have been an Eltham Farmers' Market stallholder since the market started over 8 years ago.

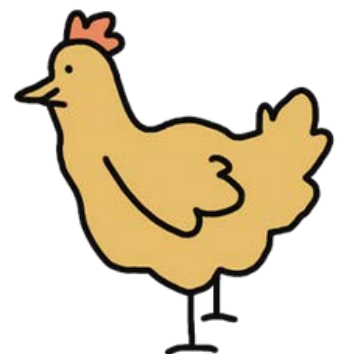
The students had a wonderful time at the farm and we are told that the trip home was "abuzz with sharing experiences".



Farmer Incubator

This year LFC sponsored a student to attend the Farmer Incubator "Grow a Farmer" program.

Farmer Incubator "aim to grow the next generation of conscious farmers, because without them, there can be no regeneration of land or our food system".



CHUTE STREET

Changing of the Guard

The Chute Street planter boxes were established in 2014 by the Diamond Creek Traders with support from Local Food Connect, Thrive Community Garden, The NICE Foundation and Nillumbik Council.

Their objective is to grow attractive edibles for passers-by to be able to pick and eat.

Over the past 8 years, LFC member, and longtime committee member, Pam Jenkins, has led the revolving band of volunteers and students from Diamond Creek Primary School who have looked after the boxes.

Pam has now decided it is time to move on and is seen handing her watering can on to Sarah and Guilliana from Thrive Community Garden who are taking over the task.



FOOD POLICY

Our Role

For many years LFC has been encouraging our local councils to develop their strategies through a "food lens" and this year we were delighted to see Banyule Council embark on developing a Food Strategy

Banyule Food Strategy

Banyule City Council has engaged Sustain to develop their Urban Food Strategy.

LFC is participating in the Working Group. We have hosted a community consultation at the Eltham Farmers' Market and will be leading some "kitchen table" consultations also.

Below: The Banyule City Council, Urban Food Strategy Working Group.



NEWSLETTER & WEBSITE

The newsletter is a weekly production which is currently sent to around 4,000 people each week.

The website comprises several thousand pages and is currently viewed by around 9,000 people each week.

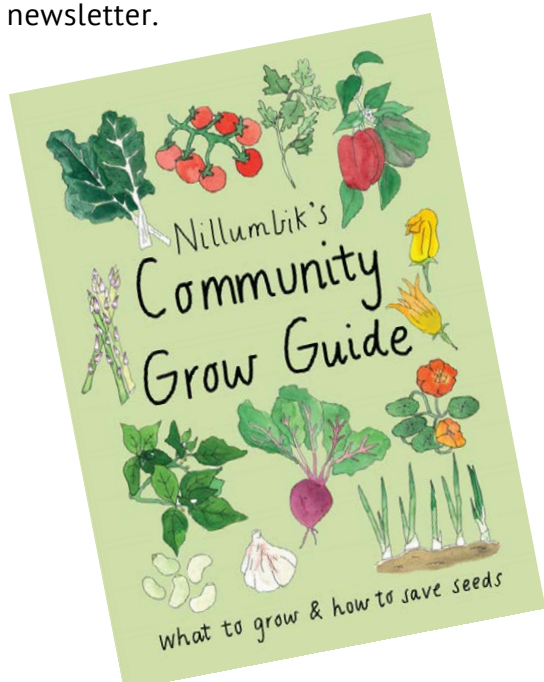
The two are closely intertwined, with any new articles on the website being summarised in the newsletter and with most of the material from the newsletters also being somewhere on the website. Both focus on the geographic area of 'North East Melbourne'.

NEWSLETTER

In 2022, post the lockdowns, the newsletter reverted to its traditional focus on advertising upcoming local events. In any one week, there are a large number of local, face-to-face, food-related events – around 120 – and each is advertised in the newsletters.

In addition, each weekly newsletter contained the news of the week and at least one article on a food growing or food eating subject. Particular thanks are due to regular contributors Ann Stanley, Jaimie Sweetman, Robin Gale-Baker and Megan Goodman.

Since the start of the pandemic, around 450 different people have contributed to the newsletter.



WEBSITE

The main purpose of the website is to be a source of information about local food organisations and activities, where local means 'North East Melbourne'.

The database includes information about local food producers, local food outlets, community gardens, food swaps and local food justice organisations. In total, around 330 local food organisations now have pages on the website, each of which has been developed in concert with the organisation, who have also approved the final presentation.

New organisations and activities are added as and when we become aware of them.

Most of the people who visit the website live in Melbourne. By far the most popular page is a planting guide of what veggies to plant when (120,000 unique page views in the last year). After that, the most popular section is our how to grow guides (collectively 150,000 unique page views). A page that is becoming ever more popular is that on food-related proverbs (20,000 unique page views).

Picture: Angharad Neal-William's recently launched "Community Grow Guide".

TREASURER'S REPORT 2021/22

LFC continues to be in a strong financial position to support current and future projects

Local Food Connect had a modest financial result in FY22/22, generating a net surplus of \$6,071, bringing cash on hand to \$127,141 at 30 June 2022.

Compared to last year's surplus of \$25,630, this year's result is a reflection of rising market running costs coupled with slightly fewer stalls at the market each week. Options for restoring finances to a healthier position can be considered by the new committee.

Richard Rowe has again prepared all of the necessary paperwork for an external audit. While it is not a statutory requirement for Local Food Connect to have its financial accounts audited, it was agreed by the Committee that an independent audit be undertaken. The Committee once again engaged Rankin and Young of Rosanna to perform the audit. A copy of the Audited statements is available on request.

Committee member Ann Hague has taken over the role of managing membership renewals and communications this year. Membership fees in FY21/22 was \$957 compared to \$1,175 the previous year.

With fewer COVID-19 restrictions in the second half of this financial year, we have enjoyed a return to regular weekly market entertainment. Local Food Connect spent a total of \$5,672 to bring this extra vitality to the market. A huge thanks to committee member Fay Loveland for booking all of our wonderful acts.

LFC has acted as auspice for a number of grant applications throughout the year. We supported the Hurstbridge Edible Hub on a number of projects and local illustrator Angharad Neal-Williams on her recently launched "Community Grow Guide".

LFC sponsored an applicant in Farmer Incubator's "Grow a Farmer" program, contributing \$1,490 towards training an aspiring young farmer to grow garlic.

LFC continued its support for the Monty Hub, contributing \$5,000 towards the development of a commercial kitchen. This was pledged last year to bolster grant funding from the Banyule Council. We look forward to seeing the kitchen opening for classes in 2023.

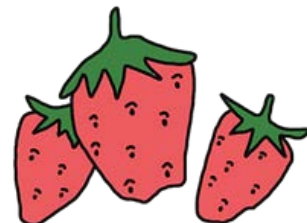
Holding significant cash on hand, LFC remains in a healthy position to be able to support the establishment of an urban farm in the coming year while retaining sufficient funds as contingency for relocating the Eltham Farmers' Market and other projects which might arise.

To conclude, I'd like to say a huge thanks to Richard Rowe, who is retiring from his role as Book Keeper of Local Food Connect after 10 years of service. Richard recently managed a smooth handover to Felicity Cantwell, our new book keeper.

Dan Milne
Treasurer – Local Food Connect

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2022



LOCAL FOOD CONNECT INC.
ABN 24 920 029 361

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2022

<u>2021</u>		
INCOME		
151,499	Farmers' Market Stall Fees	157,967
1,175	Membership Fees	957
-	Donations and Grants	
760	Other revenue	330
418	Bank interest	213
<u>153,852</u>		<u>159,467</u>
EXPENDITURE		
3,259	Advertising & Marketing	2,414
650	Art Work and Signage	2,850
1,000	Audit Fees	1,000
91	Bank Fees	81
650	Bookkeeping	-
1,692	Carbon Offsets	1,738
296	Donations Given	1,490
1,044	Depreciation	522
2,950	EFM Entertainment	5,822
1,127	Equipment	1,412
6,546	General expenses	3,452
829	Helpers at EFM	-
1,466	Insurance	1,466
9,923	Levies and Fees	9,855
54,250	Market Management Cost	66,950
270	Other Entertainment & Catering	-
-	Printing & Desk Top Publishing	1,157
16,120	Rent	16,410
-	Repairs and Maintenance	1,281
550	Software / Cloud subs	708
273	Speaker costs	-
-	Subscriptions	46
1,255	Superannuation	2,412
21,876	Wages and Salaries	29,497
1,890	Waste Disposal & Cleaning	2,619
215	Workcover	214
<u>128,222</u>		<u>153,396</u>
25,630	NET PROFIT/(LOSS)	6,071
<u>95,440</u>	Add accumulated profits at 1/7/2021	<u>121,070</u>
<u>\$ 121,070</u>	Accumulated profits at 30/6/2022	<u>\$ 127,141</u>

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2022



LOCAL FOOD CONNECT INC.
ABN 24 920 029 361

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30TH JUNE 2022

<u>2021</u>	
CURRENT ASSETS	
44,006	Cash at bank - EFM operating account 24,268
13,885	- LFC operating account 14,448
62,377	- Term deposits 82,590
102	- Paypal account 928
140	- Petty cash 50
964	Prepayments - insurance 964
4,030	- rent 4,030
<u>125,504</u>	<u>127,278</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS	
2,169	Equipment at cost 2,169
(1,125)	less depreciation (1,646) 523
-	Shares in Monty Community hub 5,000
<u>1,044</u>	<u>5,523</u>
<u>126,548</u>	TOTAL ASSETS <u>132,801</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES	
2,805	Trade payables and accruals 4,700
1,684	Deferred income 1,179
989	GST Payable (219)
<u>5,478</u>	<u>5,660</u>
<u>\$ 121,070</u>	NET ASSETS <u>\$ 127,141</u>
EQUITY	
<u>\$ 121,070</u>	Accumulated profits <u>\$ 127,141</u>



localfoodconnect.org.au