



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



PRESIDENT'S OVERVIEW

A year of Lows and Highs

The 2022/23 year was dominated by our efforts to establish an urban farm at Fabbro Fields in Eltham. Those efforts, the culmination of a 10-year journey, were ultimately blocked on 26th September 2023 by Nillumbik Council who voted that we should not be allowed to submit a planning application.

A particular point of frustration was that the State Government (DJPR's Living Local Fund) had seen sufficient merit in our proposal to provide a \$200,000 grant.

The Fabbro story is explained further in our final Fabbro Community Bulletin: <https://mailchi.mp/a64e4ef42216/an-urban-farm-for-eltham-9417295>



Picture: (L) Painting of farmer Maurie Fabbro and (R) Helen Simson meeting with collaborators from CERES.

This was a great blow to those involved. LFC and our supporters remain of the view that Fabbro's is uniquely well placed, in Nillumbik and probably Melbourne, to provide the many, significant, and important community benefits that we were working for.

While the Fabbro vote at Nillumbik Council was the low point for our local food system advocacy, Banyule provided a highlight the previous day. On 25th September Banyule City Council adopted their Urban Food Strategy and Action Plan which we look forward to supporting in the year to come.

PRESIDENT'S OVERVIEW - 2

A year of Lows and Highs

Financially our normal activity was challenged. Our main income is the surplus generated by the farmers' market but in common with many other enterprises we have faced increased costs. The result was a trading loss for the market of \$2,000 in the 22/23 financial year. Recent fee increases are expected to improve this situation and generate a small surplus to support our activities, while keeping our fees competitive for stallholders.

While we have experienced a major disappointment Local Food Connect has experienced many significant achievements during the year as is demonstrated by the pages that follow.

The committee's achievements were much enhanced by team members: Guy Palmer and Ann Stanley. Nothing happens without someone taking responsibility for making it happen. Responsibility was taken and much happened.

I cannot thank the committee enough for their contributions, many of which are mentioned within this report. I need to make special mention of Helen Simpson and Dan Milne who applied much time, skill, and effort towards our Fabbros dream.

It is now 15 years since Local Food Connect was first conceived and much has been achieved in that time. Based on the strength of our team and the "connections" we have built over the years, I am confident that the year ahead will be one of more positive achievement, towards our mission of enhancing the local food system.



CHRIS CHAPPLE

President

Our 2022-23 committee:
Bev Middleton, Dan Milne, Ann
Hague, David Hicks, Fay
Loveland, Chris Chapple, and
Helen Simpson.



FAY LOVELAND

Thank you

Fay Loveland is leaving our committee after 10 years of very valuable contribution to LFC activities.

Fay joined the LFC committee in August 2013. Fay immediately became involved in our food swap program. She remains involved today as joint coordinator of the EFM swap with Bev Robertson.

Fay has been responsible for the continued success of the swap at Eltham Farmers' Market and has also helped many other local swaps along the way.

Fay was involved in the Eltham Farmers' Market from the outset. She has been a valued member of the management team as well as spending a decade organising the entertainment program. Our entertainment is often praised by the public, by stallholders and our musicians. It makes a big contribution to the formula that makes the market so successful in generating the special feel and sense of community which is valued by many.



Fay has also contributed in many other ways including LFC's advocacy to Banyule City Council to develop a Food Strategy. BCC subsequently funded and then executed an Urban Food Strategy that was adopted in September 2023.

Thank you, Fay. We wish you well for the future.

ELTHAM FARMERS' MARKET

Delivers on its goal to be a true alternative

The Eltham Farmers' Market continues to perform well. It is highly regarded by both locals and stallholders. Attendance in the 2022-23 year was 108,260 which is an average 2,165 per market.

Beyond the number of attendees, it is the nature of the attendance that is special. LFC's objective is that the market offers a serious alternative to the surrounding mega corporations that distribute the end products of global supply chains and an industrialised food system.

The queue of eager customers that is waiting at eight o'clock each Sunday and the way our customers come prepared with empty shopping bags testifies that we are having success!

There was a little too much success in December when the popularity of the local cherries generated a queue that extended across the adjoining car park to Dudley Street!



Below:

- **Silvertine Farm** – a biodynamic veggie farm from Warburton in the Yarra Valley.
- **Bears & Bagels** – from Coldstream.
- **Kinglake West Blueberries**.



MARKET EXTRAS

Community 1

Every year Local Food Connect aims to help our fellow travelers in the community who are working to strengthen our food system or on other sustainability issues.



Among those we hosted this year were:

- The Wilderness Society.
- SUSTAIN who engaged the community seeking input to Banyule City Council's Urban Food Strategy.
- The launch of Angharad Neal-Williams' Nillumbik Community Grow Guide.



We gained a second New Year on 19th March when the local Iranian community shared their New Year celebrations with us and created the largest market attendance of the year - over 4,000!

MARKET EXTRAS

Community 2

- We regularly hosted our friends from the Monty Hub and Montmorency Community Group.
- Northeast Region Permaculture (NERP) were a regular visitor.
- Once again, the CFA came to alert us to the danger of bushfire.



Entertainment

Many thanks to Fay Loveland who has overseen our entertainment program since the market started in 2014. Supporting local entertainers is an important by-product of the market and the quality of our program is often complimented on by our customers and stallholders.



Entertainment at Eltham Farmers' Market has gone from strength to strength in 2023 with several new bands signing up to play. We had several jazz quartets entertain us this year, and they were very popular with the Eltham crowd.

Our webmaster, Guy Palmer keeps a fabulous record of everyone who has played at the market over the last 10 years on this webpage:

<https://localfoodconnect.org.au/elthamfm/some-of-the-entertainers/>

MARKET EXTRAS

Food Swap

Food swaps are a great way to help and connect our home growers. LFC promotes a number of food swaps including the one held every 4th Sunday at the Eltham Farmers' market.



The Eltham Food Swap is hosted by Bev Robertson and Fay Loveland.

The swappers continue to give generously from their productive gardens. As well as swapping between themselves, excess produce is often given to appreciative market shoppers who wander past the stall.

Special thanks to Margaret (who makes very popular jams and preserves), to Carol (also for her preserves and seedlings), and to Stuart and Christine for their regular donations of fruit and vegetables!

Excess seeds donated at the swap are occasionally packaged up and passed on to the Eltham seed library, housed at Eltham Library.

POP UP GARLIC FARMERS

It is important to encourage new generations of farmers

Led by Bev Middleton, LFC again sponsored attendees to attend the Pop-Up Garlic Farmers program. Bev successfully identified two promising young farmers who have both enjoyed and greatly benefitted from the PUGF experience.



In line with our goal of fostering urban farming and local food connections, LFC sponsored two local aspiring farmers to participate in Farmer Incubator's Pop-Up Garlic Farmers program.

Farm Incubator is a not-for-profit organization that supports people, who are interested in farming, using a mini garlic farm as the model.

This initiative not only supports the growth of sustainable, locally sourced produce but also demonstrates Local Food Connect's commitment to building a strong sense of community through the promotion of urban farming.

The Pop-Up Garlic Farmers (PUGF) course is a fast-tracked learning experience that enables the participants to experiment through growing garlic.

LFC's pop-up garlic farmers for 2023 are Vicky Ellmore and Lynn-eva Bottomley. They are both passionate about growing local food for their community. Sponsored by Local Food Connect, they are farming on land in Bundoora. Reflecting on this year's course, Lynn-eva and Vicky loved the camaraderie of the group and the generosity of the garlic farmers they met and their mentors. They said it was fun, fuelled their passion, and showed them the realities of farming. They are looking forward to harvesting their crops and are very keen to share what they learned. They are also looking forward to taking the next steps in finding work on established farms with a view to investigating opportunities to start their own farm.

LOCAL FOOD CONNECTIONS

LFC's radio show, Local Food Connections, airs every Sunday at 10am on radio station 3CR. The program was devised and is now compered by LFC member Ann Stanley.

Local Food Connections first aired on 25th June 2023. The show has quickly hit its stride, with many people and organisations keen to speak on air about their contributions to facilitating our local food economy.



Pictured: Ann Stanley (L) with recent interviewees Collette Couper and Sarah Swierzy from the Murundaka housing co-op which has a large communal productive garden.

The response to the show has been very positive. At the time of writing there have been 700 visits to the podcasts in the three weeks since the first podcast went up on the 3CR web-site.

You can hear the episodes at 3cr.org.au/localfoodconnections/episodes

Our very own Guy Palmer, Dan Milne, Bev Middleton, Paul Gale-Baker and Robin Gale-Baker have all spoken with enthusiasm about local food-related subjects such as community connections, water, urban farms, regenerative agriculture, soil, and the centrality of co-operative relationships in successful community groups.

LOCAL FOOD CONNECTIONS - 2

LFC's radio show, Local Food Connections, airs every Sunday at 10am on radio station 3CR. The program was devised and is now compered by LFC member Ann Stanley.

Claire Smith, Olwyn Smiley and Erin Goedhart, all readers of the Local Food Connect newsletter and community leaders in their own right, spoke about the significant amounts of food they are growing in their backyards.

Chelsea McNab of Yarra Valley ECOSS, Anne Duncan, CEO of Melbourne Farmers Markets, and Nick Rose of Sustain: the Australian Food Network described the work of their organisations in localising food production to reduce carbon miles and about the hows and whys of organising communities to bring about change.

Permaculture leaders David Holmgren, Angelo Eliades, Virginia Solomon and Anna Matilda emphasised the role of locally-grown food in the social and economic changes we will have to bring about in order to live better on the Earth.

There is so much more to say, so many more people's voices to be heard, as we make our small contribution to the airwaves one week at a time! Stay tuned to 3CR Local Food Connections.

***And thank you to all who have contributed to getting the new show launched.
Ann.***

FOOD POLICY

City of Banyule - Urban Food Strategy

"In partnership with Sustain: The Australian Food Network, Council worked with the community to develop Banyule's first Urban Food Strategy, a blueprint for creating, celebrating and enhancing Banyule's food systems to ensure they are healthy, sustainable, equitable, inclusive and accessible."



The City of Banyule Urban Food Strategy was developed during 2022/23 and presented to Council for adoption on 25th September 2023. The Strategy and its Action Plan were adopted unanimously.

LFC was excited that Banyule recognised the importance of developing a food strategy and welcomed the opportunity to participate in various ways.

Chris Chapple and Ann Hague participated in steering group meetings, Ann Hague and Fay Loveland participated in a Community Co-design workshop and Dan Milne convened two community "kitchen table talks".

A marquee at the Eltham Farmers' Market also provided an opportunity for Sustain to engage with the community.

LFC looks forward to working with Council and other community partners to bring some of the Strategy's action items to life.

NEWSLETTER & WEBSITE

The LFC newsletter and website offer a huge amount of information on local food matters and are highly valued by our community and others interested in this space. They are made possible by the dedication and energy of our webmaster and editor Guy Palmer.

The newsletter is a weekly production which is currently sent to around 4,200 people each week. The website comprises several thousand pages and is currently viewed by around 8,000 people each week. The newsletter and website 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'.

Banyule's Urban Food Strategy 2023-27:

Local Food Connect is a not-for-profit community organisation that has been connecting Banyule growers and eaters for over 10 years. A weekly newsletter shares local food-related events and workshops. The Local Food Connect website includes a local food directory and is a treasure trove of gardening and cooking resources.[1]

[1] Banyule Urban Food Strategy 2023-27. P17.

NEWSLETTER

The newsletter is now in its 12th year. It is centred on publicising all the upcoming, food-related, face-to-face events around North East Melbourne. Each newsletter contains the details of around 200 upcoming events, including links to their booking arrangements.

In addition, each newsletter contains the news of the week and at least one article on a food growing or food eating subject. Particular thanks to regular contributors Ann Stanley, Celesta Van der Paal, Jaimie Sweetman, Julie French, Megan Goodman and Robin Gale-Baker.

Contributions from newsletter readers are more than welcome and vary from questions to tips. Over the years, around 500 readers have made contributions.



<https://localfoodconnect.org.au/local-directory/8887/yarra-valley-gateway-estate/>

NEWSLETTER & WEBSITE - 2



<https://localfoodconnect.org.au/local-directory/78048/blackburn-north-community-cupboard/>

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 300 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. The most popular section is our various "how to grow guides".



<https://localfoodconnect.org.au/local-directory/51787/willsmere-kitchen-garden//>

TREASURER'S REPORT 2021/22

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

Local Food Connect's income and expenditure have continued to tighten in in FY22/23, generating a net surplus of \$3,982. Total Equity at 30 June 2022 was \$131,123.

The surplus of \$3,982 was slightly lower than last year's modest surplus of \$6,071. This is a reflection of market running costs, which have continued to rise.

In August 2023, market rent officially increased from \$310 to \$480/week with back payments due for all quarters of FY22/23. This significant increase in rent was responded to with an increase in stallholder fees on 1 September 2023.

While audited statements are not available for the AGM we anticipate that these will be available shortly with no substantial change to the accounts provided with this report.

Membership fees in FY22/23 was \$799 compared to \$957 the previous year.

This year saw a full program of regular weekly market entertainment at a cost of \$9,111.

Local Food Connect sponsored two positions for Farmer Incubator's "Pop Up Garlic Farmer" program, contributing \$2000.

The "Local Food Connections" radio show on 3CR aired its first show in late June 2023. In FY22/23 Local Food Connect paid \$486 towards the show running costs and continues to contribute \$143 monthly.

With the sale of the Monty Hub site and subsequent restructure of the Hub Cooperative, LFC's two Hub shares of \$5000 were refunded to Local Food Connect with a collective loss of value of \$805.

Local Food Connect acted as auspice for two grant applications during the year. We supported local illustrator Angharad Neal-Williams with her "Community Grow Guide" and a project by Felicity Gordon titled 'Nature Journaling' completed in December.

In early January 2023, Local Food Connect was awarded a \$200,000 grant from the Living Local Fund – Suburban Grants Program for the purpose of establishing Fabbro's Community Farm. In FY22/23 \$8077 was spent in initial planning and preparation for the farm. The balance of the grant funds remain on the Local Food Connect Balance sheet awaiting further direction from the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.

LFC sought legal advice to assist us with the process of developing a new constitution. The cost was \$4,000 plus GST, with \$2000 contributed from the Fabbro's Living Local Grant.

LFC remains in a healthy position to be able to support projects in our local food system in the coming year while retaining sufficient funds as contingency for unforeseen Market costs.

Dan Milne
Treasurer – Local Food Connect

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2023

Profit and Loss

Local Food Connect

For the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023
Trading Income	
Farmers' Market Stall Fees	153,745.82
Interest Income	1,380.23
Living Local Suburban Grants Program - Fabbros Community Farm	8,077.69
Other Revenue	745.86
Total Trading Income	163,949.60
Cost of Sales	
Cost of Goods Sold	629.12
Total Cost of Sales	629.12
Gross Profit	163,320.48
Other Income	
Membership Fees	799.98
Total Other Income	799.98
Operating Expenses	
Accounting Fees	1,000.00
Advertising & Marketing	715.42
Art Work & Signage	1,015.00
Bank Fees	77.96
Carbon Offsets	1,681.20
Community Radio	486.36
Consulting & Accounting	52,250.00
Consumables	21.36
Depreciation	261.08
Donations Given	550.00
EFM Entertainment	9,111.82
Entertainment & Catering	168.84
Equipment	1,536.17
Fabbros Community Farm - Consultancy	120.00
Fabbros Community Farm - Governance	2,000.00
Fabbros Community Farm - Meeting Expense	70.18
Fabbros Community Farm- Design	5,887.51
General Expenses	526.49
Insurance	1,465.55
Levies and Fees	8,324.84
Meeting Expense	112.88
Rent	24,788.00
Repairs and Maintenance	1,919.42
Software / cloud subs	970.28
Sponsorship	2,000.00
Stationary and General Supplies	200.00
Subscriptions	150.00
Superannuation	3,650.28
Wages and Salaries	36,542.30
Waste Disposal & Cleaning	2,319.00
Workcover	215.65
Total Operating Expenses	160,137.59
Net Profit	3,982.87

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2023

Balance Sheet

Local Food Connect

As at 30 June 2023

30 JUN 2023

Assets

Bank

3 Month Term Deposit	53,022.80
Eltham Farmers Market	34,214.80
LFC Paypal Account	1,657.02
Local Food Connect operating	7,770.39
Petty Cash - EFM	50.00
Savings Account	181,313.27
TERM DEPOSIT ACCOUNT	30,000.00
Total Bank	308,028.28

Current Assets

Pre-paid Insurance	963.65
Total Current Assets	963.65

Fixed Assets

Market Equip - accumulated depreciation	(1,907.56)
Market Equipment	2,168.64
Monty Community Hub	10,000.00
Total Fixed Assets	10,261.08

Total Assets	319,253.01
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Liabilities

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	11,200.79
Accrued Rent	3,832.00
Creditor Accruals	1,000.00
GST	(20.05)
Provision for Fabbros Grant Money	171,922.31
Rounding	(0.18)
Superannuation Payable	194.51
Total Current Liabilities	188,129.38

Total Liabilities	188,129.38
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Net Assets	131,123.63
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Equity

Current Year Earnings	3,982.87
Retained Earnings	127,140.76
Total Equity	131,123.63