



2024

YEAR IN REVIEW

Freshmark is committed to being the leading voice and trusted advocate for the NSW fresh produce sector, shaping industry policy and driving sector growth.

Produced by the NSW Chamber of Fresh Produce Limited, trading as Freshmark

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



"Our vision for 2027 is clear: to be the trusted partner in a thriving independent fresh produce sector, through delivering solutions that enable member success and champion the sector's needs."

Fresh produce is a vital pillar of Australian agriculture, and here in NSW, our central markets serve as a critical link between growers, wholesalers, retailers, and consumers.

Freshmark members are the heart of this network. Their passion, dedication, and expertise drive the success of the NSW independent fresh produce sector.

We are committed to delivering value by helping to build successful, profitable businesses while ensuring their voices and interests remain central to the conversations shaping our industry's future.

Industry update

The challenges facing our sector are ever-changing. These include the increasingly powerful spotlight on regulation in fresh produce. We will need industry solidarity to navigate this and be both clear and pragmatic about our goals. Freshmark will take an active role in helping to bring industry together to address regulatory challenges, because working together is the only way we will succeed.

Meanwhile, rising input costs continue to bite, but the wider industry, government and consumers often don't recognise the impact on the markets system. The same factors affecting growers also impact the broader fresh produce sector, putting the sustainability of our independent market system at stake.

At the same time, we are battling a trend from both ends of the supply chain to bypass the markets, which makes it difficult to accelerate business growth and may require margin increases to maintain viability. We must reinforce our relevance as an industry if we are to secure our future.

It's a confronting picture but there is also good reason for optimism. Our population continues to grow. We are in a golden period where community awareness of the importance of fresh produce is very high. Consumers are looking for ways to feel better about where and how they buy their produce, creating great opportunity for independent grocers to regain market share.

Freshmark is ready to harness this momentum and secure a strong future for the sector.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Governance

It's a privilege to work with such an engaged Board and a dedicated team, led by our CEO, Meegan George. This year, we took an important step forward by introducing governance changes allowing us to appoint up to three non-member directors - a first for any state chamber in Australia.

These changes bring fresh perspectives from outside the industry and essential expertise in areas such as finance, risk, marketing, legal, and governance. At the same time, member representation remains at the heart of our Board's structure. This balanced approach ensures we are well-equipped to navigate the complexities of our evolving industry and to advance Freshmark's vision effectively.

Strategy

A highlight this year was regrouping with the board on the Freshmark strategy, combining the insights of our member-directors from the fresh produce industry with new perspectives from our independent directors. This has led to a sharper focus on generating customer and member value and a continued commitment to representing the interests of the sector to regulators, legislators and policymakers.

2027 vision

Our vision for 2027 is clear; to be the trusted partner in a thriving independent fresh produce sector, through delivering solutions that enable member success and champion the sector's needs.

I am confident through the investments we make in our team, our operations and our industry, that Freshmark will be well positioned to achieve this vision over the years ahead.

Together with our members, we are shaping a stronger future for the sector and I am excited to continue this journey with such a committed and close-knit community.

Carlo Trimboli

Chair, Freshmark

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



"Freshmark's strategy for growth will cement our position as a trusted voice on key issues while improving the value we deliver to our members and customers."



Freshmark and the independent fresh produce sector are navigating a period of significant transformation. Our commitment remains firm: to help our members thrive in an increasingly competitive environment.

Strategy development and implementation

We continue to focus on delivering real value to members through cost reduction initiatives, strategic partnerships, and new services that support profitability.

Alongside these efforts, we invested in the award-winning National Retail Program, 'A Better Choice!', which promotes local independent greengrocers with the goal of sustaining the central markets system across Australia.

Our success hinges on:

- Significantly growing our membership base, particularly within the NSW independent retail sector;
- Delivering tangible cost reductions;
- Enhancing business competitiveness; and
- Building strategic partnerships across the industry.

Equally important will be recognition from members, policymakers and key stakeholders for our role in shaping industry policy and driving sector growth.

Looking ahead

Looking ahead, we remain committed to expanding how Freshmark delivers value to members and the sector. In response to member feedback, we have intensified our focus on providing direct, tangible benefits that improve day-to-day business efficiency.

Our cost-reduction initiatives continue to deliver significant savings for members, with many benefiting from reduced overheads, access to industry-leading produce testing, and practical support navigating complex regulatory and compliance challenges.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Over the next year, we plan to launch new initiatives that help members stay competitive by leveraging collective purchasing power to secure targeted benefits in key operational areas.

To support these efforts, we have invested in building team capacity and upgrading technology platforms to enhance our operational efficiency.

Advocacy in action

The complex and evolving regulatory and compliance environment continues to place a significant burden on our members. Through our advocacy, we work to influence legislative and policy outcomes by representing members' perspectives on key reforms and potential changes.

Over the past year, we have stepped up these efforts to make an even stronger case for the independent sector with industry and regulators.

This has amplified members' voices on critical issues, including the Independent Toll Review, Unfair Trading Practices Review, Inquiry into Food Security, Food and Grocery Code of Conduct Review, and the ACCC Supermarkets Inquiry.

At an individual business level, we provide hands-on support to help members navigate the effects of existing regulatory and compliance requirements, including guidance on managing audits and addressing operational challenges.

A strong foundation

Freshmark's strategy for growth will cement our position as a trusted voice on key issues while improving the value we deliver to our members and customers.

Our members' success is the foundation of a strong independent fresh produce sector in NSW.

We are excited about the road ahead and confident that, with the support of our Board, members, and the broader industry, Freshmark will continue to play an essential role in the sector's growth, relevance and collective strength.

Meegan George

Chief Executive Officer, Freshmark

THE FRESHMARK BOARD

Over the past two years, Freshmark has been transitioning to a skills-based board structure designed to bring together the best mix of financial, strategic and management skill and the invaluable insights of board members who have firsthand experience in the fresh produce sector. Our eight-member Board includes five members who live and breathe Sydney Markets, and three appointed members who come with a specific skillset to help Freshmark achieve its goals on behalf of its members.



Carlo Trimboli

Chair

Carlo has been involved in the wholesale fruit and vegetable industry for over 35 years, and his experience and knowledge have earned him a reputation for excellence. He is Managing Director of Samson's Fruit and Vegetable Supply and is Chair of both Freshmark and the Sydney Markets Foundation. He takes pride in supporting local growers and believes in the importance of promoting fresh and healthy food to the community.

Carlo continues to be a driving force in the Sydney Markets, and is leading Freshmark's transition to a skills-based board structure designed to position the organisation and the industry for the future.



Joe Zappia

Deputy Chair

Joe, a third-generation wholesaler, has fresh produce in his DNA. Alongside his brother David, he runs Zappia Produce Group, continuing their family's legacy in the industry. Joe's dedication earned him the Col Johnson National Young Achievers Award for outstanding contributions to the Market Industry Committee, where he served as president for several years.

As Freshmark's Deputy Chair, Joe embodies passion, experience, and integrity. For more than 25 years, he has prioritised exceptional customer service and achieving the best results for growers, fostering strong relationships that have enhanced his effectiveness as a leader.

Joe resigned from the Board on 20 November 2024.

THE FRESHMARK BOARD



Caroline Pisciuoneri

Caroline's family business All Seasons Produce has been part of Sydney Markets for three decades. In addition to her Board role, Caroline sits on Freshmark's Industry Advocacy Committee and the Sydney Markets Limited Board.

Caroline is proud to be part of a long line of influential women who have left an indelible mark on our industry through their Freshmark directorship. Her expertise covers the entire spectrum of fresh produce, including ownership of Seven Springs apple orchard in Batlow and being a wholesaler at the Sydney Markets.

Her influence is also enhanced through membership of the Batlow Fruit Co-operative and Ausfarm Fresh. Her goal is to provide a solid and sustainable future for our industry and for generations to come.

Caroline resigned from the Board on 20 November 2024.



Steve Barnes

Steve is passionate about the industry and the people it supports and believes the Sydney Markets play a key role in the success of the sector.

His goal is to connect growers with customers and the end consumer, through the engagement and growth of people. He believes there is a fantastic story to tell an increasingly sophisticated consumer base, looking for provenance and authenticity in the fresh produce they buy.

Steve heads JetBest Group, and is excited to support Freshmark to be responsive and innovative in meeting market demands and putting customer service at the heart of all initiatives.

In addition to his board role, Steve is Chair of the Industry Advocacy Committee.



Matthew Palise

Matt has over 20 years of experience in the Australian fresh fruit and vegetable industry, across sectors including growing, packing, wholesale, and retail, and is currently Managing Director of Red Rich Fruits. He is also a qualified accountant with expertise in profitable growth.

Matt is dedicated to building a bright and sustainable future for Freshmark and the fresh produce industry. He believes the key to success is in the numbers, innovation and remaining agile to take advantage of new information, trends and technologies.

THE FRESHMARK BOARD



Carolyn Miller

Carolyn is an appointed board member who joined the Freshmark Board in 2024. She brings deep expertise in marketing and advertising built over a career of more than 20 years. Carolyn is founding director of communications consultancy The Honeycomb Effect and a regular panellist on the ABC television program 'Gruen'. She believes in elevating locally owned and operated businesses, knowing that innovation, quality, the economy and families all benefit from having a diverse marketplace of operators. As a member of the Freshmark Board, Carolyn champions the right for all participants in the supply chain to make a profit, have authority over their own operations and have their voices heard in the regulatory environment.

Carolyn was appointed Deputy Chair of the Board on 10 December 2024.



Mark Arnold

Mark is an appointed board member with over 30 years of experience in financial services. He has held senior finance positions globally, including in London, New York, and Hong Kong, and served as CFO for a number of companies. As a Deloitte partner in Australia and South Africa, Mark specialised in organisational and accounting compliance, and strategic business transformation using cloud technology. He is also a board director for Blue Knot and Afford.

As the fresh produce industry faces climate change, supply chain disruptions, and regulatory challenges, Mark believes that embracing ESG principles, sustainable practices, ethical labour standards, and strong governance is crucial. The industry must adapt to consumer demand for sustainability, ensuring long-term viability and positive impact through technological change.



Fiona Jolly

Fiona is an appointed member of the Freshmark Board. She is an experienced Chair, Non-Executive Director, Chief Executive Officer, and lawyer with a background in FMCG businesses, rural industries, media and communications, infrastructure, and member organisations. Her passion lies in helping businesses achieve success by providing services, goods, and information in an effective and ethical manner. Her international experience includes working with multinational corporations and regulatory and self-regulatory organisations on domestic, regional, and global levels, including collaborations with APEC and ASEAN. Fiona brings integrity, energy and a collaborative spirit to her roles. She is results-driven, determined to deliver, and committed to ethical governance.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

The Freshmark Board

This year saw some big changes to the way that Freshmark is governed. We became the first state chamber to change its Constitution so that instead of requiring all Board directors to be members of Freshmark, up to three non-member directors can now be appointed by the directors to the Board.

This means that we can now draw on a wider range of skills and experience when appointing directors. During the year, we had three new additions to the Board, bringing specialist skills in areas such as finance, risk, marketing, law and governance.

Importantly, the majority of the Board is still required to be made up of Freshmark members. In the future, the Board will be able to target the skill sets it needs among its member directors to carry out its strategies.

How we govern

So we can give the right focus to the most important parts of our strategy, Freshmark has a number of committees that meet regularly. They delve deeply into their specialist areas and make recommendations to the Board. Committees are made up of Board members and where needed, some external experts.



CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Our committees are:

Industry Advocacy Committee (IAC)

The IAC provides a forum to advocate for the interests of members of Freshmark and the wider NSW fresh produce industry. It considers issues impacting members of Freshmark and formulates responses that represents their interests.

With the input of representatives from the fresh produce industry, the IAC articulates Freshmark's position on such things as the Food and Grocery Code and the ACCC Supermarket Inquiry and makes submissions to the relevant body.

Board Committee members: Steve Barnes (Chair) and Carolyn Miller

Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (FAR)

The FAR assists the Board in fulfilling its responsibility on matters relating to finance, audit and risk pertaining to the operations of Freshmark. It advises the Board on Freshmark's financial management and controls and ensures that there is an effective Risk Management Framework in place.

The FAR Committee oversees the audit process, recommends the financial statements to the Board, monitors Freshmark's financial performance and, in partnership with our investment advisors, ensures that Freshmark's assets are invested prudently.

Board Committee members: Mark Arnold (Chair), Carlo Trimboli and Joe Zappia

Governance & Nominations Committee (G&N)

The G&N reviews the governance structures and practices of Freshmark and makes recommendations to the Board on all matters relating to its governance.

The G&N oversees and evaluates the Board's composition, recruitment, performance and compliance with legal obligations. It monitors the skills that are needed on the Board to achieve the strategy. It may also overview CEO performance, succession planning, and recruitment.

Board Committee members: Fiona Jolly (Chair), Carlo Trimboli, Caroline Piscuneri and Joe Zappia

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Board and committee attendance 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

	BOARD		IAC		FAR		G&N	
	Available	Attended	Available	Attended	Available	Attended	Available	Attended
Carlo Trimboli	6	6			3	2	2	2
Joe Zappia	6	5			3	2	3	2
Caroline Pisciueneri	6	4	4	2			2	1
Steve Barnes	6	6	4	4				
Tony Campisi	2	1						
Mark Arnold	4	4			3	3		
Carolyn Miller	4	4	2	2				
Fiona Jolly	4	2					2	2
Matt Palise	4	1						

Notes:

- Caroline Pisciueneri is a member of the IAC as an industry representative, rather than in her capacity as a Board member.
- Matt Palise resigned 22 August 2023
- Tony Campisi resigned 15 November 2023
- Carolyn Miller and Mark Arnold appointed 15 November 2023
- Fiona Jolly appointed 27 November 2023
- Matt Palise reappointed 24 January 2024
- Caroline Pisciueneri resigned 20 November 2024
- Joe Zappia resigned 20 November 2024



YOUR FRESHMARK TEAM

Over the past year, Freshmark has focused on refining its team capacity and capabilities to not only continue to support the day-to-day needs of members, but to upscale our ability to drive industry forward.

The team is small but mighty, with an unwavering focus on delivering Freshmark's strategic goals.



Freshmark is led by CEO **Meegan George**, who has been at the helm since 2021 and has delivered a significant strategic review and brought a strong focus on rigorous governance. Meegan is a transformative leader dedicated to a thriving and sustainable future for the fresh food sector.

She has over two decades' experience at C-suite level and has spent more than a decade working with not-for-profit industry associations, advocating for their growth and sustainability, to benefit both members and their broader communities.

Meegan is an executive director of Fresh Markets Australia and the Sydney Markets Foundation, and non-executive director of Sydney Markets Limited. She also sits on a wide range of industry boards and committees.



Ben Hammond joined the team in July 2024 as Marketing Manager, with a background in business-to-business and consumer marketing, and extensive experience in growing membership organisations. He oversees the development and implementation of strategic marketing initiatives to build the relevance and impact of the Freshmark brand, as well as leading marketing efforts for Freshmark's membership, products and services.



Larisa Vesse, Business Development Specialist, joined Freshmark in August 2024 from the independent fresh produce sector. She brings experience from Sydney Markets' wholesalers and her work with Fresh Markets Australia on the NSW implementation of their award winning 'A Better Choice!' consumer awareness and independent retailer promotion program.

YOUR FRESHMARK TEAM



Paddy Fox joined the marketing team as Digital Marketing Specialist in October on a six-month contract, to support the implementation of key marketing projects including a new customer relationship management system and redevelopment of the Freshmark website. These projects will underpin future campaign activity to be rolled out in 2025 that will drive growth for Freshmark in membership, products and services.



The team is supported by Customer Service and Marketing Coordinator **Lindi Shull**, who has been with Freshmark for almost four years. Lindi works with the team to support the delivery of key initiatives such as FreshTest[®], membership, marketing, and major events throughout the year.



Freshmark bade a fond farewell this year to **Sue Zacherl**, whose constant presence on the market floor was felt for almost a decade in her role as Business Services Manager. We wish Sue all the best in her retirement.

STRATEGIC VISION: 2024 TO 2027

As noted in the Chair and CEO’s reports, Freshmark undertook a strategy refresh during 2024 to guide our operations through to 2027, with a focus on relevance, growth and generating value for our members.

As a cornerstone of the NSW agricultural economy, the independent fresh produce sector plays a vital role in supporting local communities and delivering high-quality produce. Freshmark proudly champions this dynamic industry, providing advocacy, innovative solutions, and opportunities that enhance the competitiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of our members.

The strategic refresh aims to strengthen Freshmark’s position as a trusted partner in the sector’s future. Through consultation with our members and Board, we identified key opportunities to amplify the value we provide, ensuring our efforts translate directly into tangible benefits for businesses across the supply chain.

	Key area	Description	Strategic component			
Strategic architecture	VISION	What we want	To be the trusted partner in a thriving independent fresh produce sector			
	VALUE PROPOSITION	What our compelling benefits are	Delivering solutions to enable members’ success and championing the needs of the sector			
	STRATEGIC PILLARS	Where we will focus to drive our success	Member & customer value		Trusted voice	
	FRESHMARK ENABLERS	Enablers of our strategic pillars	People & culture	Infrastructure & technology	Brand & reputation	Products & partners
	VALUES	What we believe in and how we want to behave	Respect	Accountability	Innovation	Leadership

The strategy focuses on two critical pillars: **generating member and customer value** and being the **trusted voice** for the NSW independent fresh produce industry. We are dedicated to expanding our reach, reducing costs, and launching innovative solutions that empower our members in a rapidly evolving market. By building strong partnerships, we will ensure collaboration and shared benefits that support the sustainability of the sector.

STRATEGIC VISION: 2024 TO 2027

Advocacy remains a critical focus, as we influence key policy decisions and strengthen Freshmark's reputation as the go-to voice for policymakers, the media, and industry leaders in NSW.

Freshmark is investing in new capability, capacity, tools and technology to streamline our operations and open new opportunities for growth. At the same time, we are focused on supporting members to adopt practices that meet emerging regulatory requirements and improve long-term business resilience.

Our vision is to be the NSW trusted partner in a thriving independent fresh produce sector. By focusing on practical solutions, innovation, and strong advocacy, Freshmark is contributing to building a sustainable and prosperous future for all our members and the wider sector.



FRESHMARK POLICY POSITIONS

Freshmark's policy agenda is focused on solutions that make working in our sector easier, more appealing and more sustainable.



LABOUR

Freshmark supports fair, equitable, and inclusive access to staff for businesses across the NSW fresh produce supply chain, and a safe, adequately remunerated work environment for workers.

To achieve this, our focus is on ensuring the sector is seen as a viable and appealing industry for workers to join. This requires the development of formal career pathways and educational opportunities for workers; adequate training and support for businesses around compliance; appropriate regulation of labour hire practices; and a strong commitment to worker wellbeing.



FOOD SECURITY

Access to fresh, safe, high-quality produce at an affordable price is the right of all Australians. Locally-grown, fresh produce should be prioritised in the community and the fresh produce supply chain must be protected to secure the future of the fresh produce sector.

Freshmark is committed to maintaining flexibility in the market to ensure produce can be grown and sold at a price point that is affordable for consumers while delivering business surety for those in the sector. It is our position that food security cannot be achieved without securing the success of the businesses in the supply chain.



ENVIRONMENT

Safeguarding our natural resources is critical to the future of the fresh produce sector, at all points along the supply chain.

Freshmark supports measures that enable industry to deliver the right type and volume of produce to meet market demand, in order to reduce waste. Additionally, Freshmark is committed to enabling industry to implement new approaches to energy use and prepare for and protect against the impact of climate change.

In addition, Freshmark is committed to participating in a whole-of-industry, national approach to the development of a fresh produce ESG framework that will support industry participants to understand their obligations and manage their environmental profiles.

FRESHMARK POLICY POSITIONS



REGULATION AND GOVERNANCE

A sound regulatory framework is one that is fair, properly matched to the needs of the sector it serves and the businesses in that sector, and adequately resourced for enforcement when necessary.

Regulatory authorities must consult properly with industry and take action as appropriate to ensure a fair and equitable sector. Freshmark is committed to reducing the complexity and inherent unfairness of a multi-tiered approach to compliance in the NSW fresh produce sector, while ensuring businesses are properly supported to understand and meet their obligations.



CONSUMER EDUCATION

A thriving fresh produce sector relies on consumers who understand the roles of each player in the fresh produce supply chain, and who recognise the value of buying and consuming nutritious, fresh, safe, domestically grown produce.

Freshmark will work to help create an informed and empowered consumer base, which has the potential to drive up demand for fresh produce, and in turn, help secure the future of this critical sector.



SUPPORTING MEMBERS, SUPPORTING INDUSTRY

Freshmark's strength lies in its ability to deliver practical, impactful solutions that address the diverse needs of the NSW independent fresh produce sector. Through an extensive range of products and services, Freshmark helps members overcome challenges, streamline operations, and reduce the cost of doing business, all while fostering a sense of community within the sector.



At the core of our offering is the ability to simplify operations and ease compliance burdens. Programs like FreshTest®, Australia's largest and most comprehensive horticultural testing initiative, provide low-cost chemical residue and microbial testing, enabling businesses to meet food safety standards with confidence. Similarly, our human resources and industrial relations support delivered to members through our partnership with the Australian Federation of Employers & Industries (AFEI) helps businesses to ensure they are compliant with Fair Work and provide an appropriate working environment for their people.

In addition, our practical and hands-on experience in assisting our members with understanding and complying with various industry-specific regulatory requirements including HPA audit support is also highly valued.

Reducing costs for members and providing cost-efficient solutions for customers remains a key priority for Freshmark. Our collective buying power provides members with access to significant discounts across a range of essential products and services, from 24/7 LPG gas supply at the Sydney Markets to competitive mobile phone plans through Telstra. New initiatives to target input costs, such as fuel, insurance and merchant transaction processing fees, are included in our product and service development pipeline to improve cost-efficiency for members.

Freshmark also invests in strengthening the industry as a whole. Through initiatives like the 'A Better Choice!' program, we champion the value of independent greengrocers while promoting the central markets system. Our focus on fair trading practices, supported by tools like FreshCode® and FreshSpecs®, ensures that trading relationships across the supply chain remain equitable and sustainable.

SUPPORTING MEMBERS, SUPPORTING INDUSTRY

Every solution we provide is designed to generate tangible benefits for our members, helping them succeed in a competitive and dynamic market. By aligning our products and services with the broader goals of reducing costs, simplifying operations, and advocating for the sector, Freshmark continues to deliver value and support for the independent fresh produce industry.



Member discounts

When members buy through Freshmark they benefit from our increased buying power and efficient service delivery.

	LPG gas - onsite at the markets, operating 24/7 with centralised invoicing and billing.	Save 9c per litre on bowser price
	FreshTest® - nationally accredited, industry leading, quality assurance program offering low-cost MRL (chemical residue), microbial, and heavy metal testing for verification of food safety and compliance with quality assurance systems.	Up to 20% off
	Telstra mobile - range of discounted phone plans at competitive rates for members and their team.	25% off
	Office supplies - range of discounted products through Freshmark's 'customer group' member pricing.	10% off <i>under negotiation for 2025</i>
	Merchant facility* - reduced payment processing costs on all transactions.	Up to 20% off <i>*Coming soon</i>
	Function & meeting room hire - our Boardroom is available to be booked by members free of charge and features full, large format video conferencing facilities. Onsite at Sydney Markets Plaza, Flemington.	Free valued at \$80 / hour

Member benefits

Our members have complimentary access to Human Resources (HR), Industrial Relations (IR) and audit support services, including:

	HR & IR advice and documentation - access to HR and IR document templates as well as highly skilled specialists on industrial, legal and professional issues through Freshmark's membership of the Australian Federation of Employers & Industries (AFEI), which could cost up to \$400 per hour for access to similar services.	Free valued at \$3,500+ / year
	Horticulture Produce Agreement (HPA) audit support - hands-on work from our CEO to support the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance on how Horticulture Code of Conduct can be implemented into member businesses. • HPA documentation health check, including review of sample grower files. • Assistance with ACCC audits. 	Free valued at \$400 / hour

ADVOCACY ACHIEVEMENTS

The independent fresh produce sector is crucial to every Australian. Ensuring this sector is vibrant, successful and sustainable is critical, and one of Freshmark's most important jobs is to be the voice of industry.

Over the past 18 months Freshmark has dramatically scaled up our advocacy function, so that policymakers and regulators understand why the industry we represent is so important, and what we need to make it work.

Our advocacy program is led by the Industry Advocacy Committee and continues to push for changes that will help make the sector sustainable over the longer term. Only by maintaining a solid and passionate advocacy effort can we ensure the voice of our industry is heard. We have developed key policy positions around labour, food security, environment, consumer education and regulation & governance and assign priority areas as part of our regular strategic review process.

Over the past 12 months we have contributed to a number of key inquiries and reviews, including:

- Independent Toll Review
- Unfair Trading Practices Review
- Inquiry into Food Security in Australia
- Food and Grocery Code Review
- ACCC Supermarkets Inquiry

94%

of members
value Freshmark's
advocacy

Source: Freshmark Member Research, August 2024

72%

of members
value Freshmark's
leadership

Source: Freshmark Member Research, August 2024

ADVOCACY ACHIEVEMENTS

We are proud of the positive outcomes that our advocacy work has achieved. Importantly, our expanded advocacy program has also led to an increase in the profile of Freshmark and the fresh produce sector, as evidenced through a number of connections and conversations which indicate regulators and others are sitting up and taking notice of what we have to say.

A review into the Horticulture Code of Conduct is also on the horizon and work is already underway to ensure we make the most of what will be one of the most significant opportunities we have to impact the future direction of this code. In addition, we are engaging with the NSW Government on the Primary Production and Processing (PPP) Standards for berries, leafy vegetables, and melons, advocating for the highest standards of food safety while ensuring any planned regulation is not onerous, duplicative or cost prohibitive for all affected parts of the supply chain.

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



EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

The independent fresh produce sector knows a lot about fruit, vegetables and flowers. We also know how to support and celebrate each other and get behind a worthy cause.



Race Day at Rosehill Gardens

Freshmark revived the tradition of putting on a show at Rosehill Gardens, with more than 150 guests joining us to enjoy the running of the Sydney Markets Rosebud Stakes on 17 August 2024.

It was an afternoon filled with fun and glamour as the independent fresh produce community of wholesalers, retailers and suppliers took the opportunity to connect. Many thanks to our sponsors Sydney Markets, Toyota Material Handling and Sydney Markets Credit Services for your continued and generous support of our community.

Best of the Crop Cherry Selection

In preparation for the annual Cherry Ball, a team of judges gathered at Sydney Markets on 28 November 2024 to select the finest cherries of the season for the charity auction. Joining the panel was former NRL star Josh Reynolds, who helped choose the winning box from Smiths Fruit in Wangaratta. With nearly 150 years of experience, Smiths Fruit impressed with their exceptional produce, setting the stage for this year's record-breaking event.



EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS



Cherry Ball and 43rd Annual Cherry Auction

The Sydney Markets Foundation Cherry Ball, held on 30 November 2024 at Miramare Gardens, was a standout event this year, raising a record-breaking \$165,000 with a single box of cherries from Smiths Fruit in Wangaratta. Talal and Joanne Khanafer of Trims Fresh Merrylands placed the winning bid of \$60,000, while additional contributions included \$25,000 from Sydney Markets Limited, \$20,000 from Sydney Markets Credit Services, and \$60,000 from a consortium of businesses and individuals associated with Sydney Markets.

Proceeds will support Little Wings, a charity providing free transport for seriously ill children from rural areas to the city, ensuring they receive lifesaving medical treatments. This annual celebration of the stonefruit season exemplifies the fresh produce community's generosity and dedication to making a difference.

Sydney Markets Foundation

Freshmark is proud to support the Sydney Markets Foundation. In addition to running the Cherry Auction which raised funds for Little Wings, Sydney Markets Foundation also benefited from other auction and fundraising activity at the Cherry Ball, raising more than \$50,000 to support its activities and programs throughout the year.

Over the past decade, the Sydney Markets Foundation has raised over \$1 million dollars for individuals, families, hospitals, schools, and communities and we are proud of the fact that almost 100% of the funds raised by Sydney Markets Foundation are directly passed on, thanks in no small part to our staff who all volunteer their time.





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