



## INFORMATION BULLETIN - Starting a new Market

The VFMA is often asked “how do I start a farmers’ market?” This bulletin is designed to answer your important first questions. We hope you find the answers that you are looking for here and if not please let us know so that we can answer your question and also improve this bulletin.

### What is the VFMA?

The Victorian Farmers’ Markets Association is an industry body that supports “accredited” farmers’ markets and their stallholders. We are a not-for-profit incorporated association managed by a committee of volunteers.

### What is the VFMA’s Purpose?

Our purpose is to stand up for Victorian farmers, to strengthen the viability of local producers and to jointly defend our food sovereignty through the support and promotion of accredited farmers’ markets.

### What are Accredited Farmers’ Markets?

VFMA farmers’ markets seek to provide opportunities for local growers and value added makers to sell their produce direct to the public.

In support of our purpose of supporting local producers - the following are not permitted at accredited VFMA markets:

- Re-sellers of fruit, vegetables or any other farm based product
- Re-packagers of any food or drink
- Art and craft – where no clear farm origin is defined
- Bric-a-brac

### What are your Goals?

There are many possible goals for wanting to start a farmers market. These may include: fundraising; community building; support of local business; supporting local farmers; encouraging healthy eating; and concern about food sovereignty and environmental issues.

Most market models will address the first three goals but the focus of an accredited market is to also address the latter three: supporting local farmers; encouraging healthy eating; and ensuring future generations have the opportunity to eat locally grown produce.

Before proceeding you should be comfortable that your goals align with running a VFMA accredited market.





### Will your community support a market?

Next you should take a careful look at the likelihood of a market being sustainable in your area.

To keep your patrons coming you will need a good range of quality stallholders; but to keep quality stallholders your market will need to generate enough trade give your stallholders sufficient income.

Will your catchment area provide sufficient income to sustain the market?

Consider your opportunity in the context of other local markets and compare how your market might potentially match up to others that operate in similar demographic areas.

### Where will your market be located?

One of the biggest challenges in starting a market is finding a site. Your site will benefit from being easily accessible for your patrons so proximity to an activity centre is desirable. Many potential sites will be on public land that is often controlled by council so an early indication of council's level of support may be useful.

### Who will manage your Market?

If the preceding questions have received favourable answers it is probably time to consider how the market will be managed. You may be thinking of doing it yourself, whether as a group or as an individual, or you may be thinking of delegating the task to a third party. It is often stated that the quality of the manager is the main factor influencing success.

If intending to manage the market yourself you should consider whether you have the appropriate expertise and experience and prepare a business plan.

If you are planning to subcontract management of the market there are operators who already run multiple markets that may be interested. There may also be other market managers who may be interested to help. You could approach candidates yourself or the VFMA could advertise your interest amongst our members.

### What next?

If your conclusion is that you want to establish a VFMA accredited farmers' market the next step is to join the VFMA and benefit from being a member of our organisation.

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