

FOOD IS FREE INC.



ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022



CHAIR'S STATEMENT

The 2021-22 year saw the shift from pandemic response lockdowns to returning to 'COVID normal'. For Food Is Free Inc (FIF), this included developing a host of new processes and procedures, overseeing a refreshed strategic plan, and turning our eyes towards sustainable growth and returning to running our workshops and hosting people onsite at Green Space.

While unfortunately we were not able to run all the programs we had planned for the year because of the rapidly changing COVID-19 health orders and requirements, our wonderful volunteers provided the backbone and elbow grease to deliver our markets, workshops and programs when we could, and kept the Laneway refreshed and stocked with FIF-grown and donated produce. Plus, our Green Space watered, lush with produce via numerous ongoing gardening tasks carried out by our Green Space volunteer teams and volunteer school groups, to keep the space both productive, inviting, clean and safe.



ANITA RIVERA

Food Is Free Inc. Chair



BOARD OVERVIEW 2021 - 2022

Board Members

The FIF Board consists of:

- Anita Rivera (Chair, from May 2022)
- Nat McCloy (Acting Deputy Chair, from Oct 2022)
- Victoria Mason (Treasurer, from Nov 2021)
- Katja Fiedler (Secretary, from 1 Oct 2021)
- Virginia Wilson (Board member, from 1 Oct 2021)
- Lou Ridsdale (Director, from 1 Oct 2021)

We also thank the outgoing members for their contribution and time to FIF during the 2021 - 22 year:

- Louise Merrett (Board member, 1 Oct 2021 - 17 Nov 2021)
- Anna Karen (Treasurer, 1 Oct 2021 - 13 Oct 2021)
- Kate Roberts (Board Chair, 1 Oct 2021 - 11 May 2022)
- Ellen Burns (Board member, 1 Oct 2021 - 1 Sept 2022)



NAT & VICTORIA'S FAREWELL



THE FIF INC. BOARD CHRISTMAS BREAK UP DEC 2021




THE FIF INC. BOARD AGM NOV 2022

OPERATIONAL UPDATE

While we were not able to deliver all the planned activities for the year, FIF still had some excellent highlights, in addition to our workshops, presentations and markets.


The Board employed Director Lou Ridsdale through a formal part-time, fixed term contract from 4 January 2022 (ending 4 Jan 2023). The contract is for 4.5 hours per week, under the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award (Social and Community Services Employee Level 5 Pay Point 1). Lou is continuing her tireless work for FIF in a voluntary capacity in addition to these paid hours.


2023 IMPACT MEASUREMENT

 We ran 37 workshops & events and enjoyed the company of 480 attendees who learned new skills.

 We continued our wonderful relationship with Ballarat Action Climate Co-op, plus hosted four events funded by the FFFR ABC Heywire Youth Innovation Grant and Vic Youth Fest 2022 Grant with them.

 We started our monthly markets where we sell worm juice, compost, seeds and other goodies to help people get growing in the garden.

 We continued our monthly Green Team and started a new weekly Grow & Gather group to tend to Green Space more regularly.

 We welcomed Formosa Gardens Nursery, who joined the FIF family as our first Local Hero Donor.

 We launched a line of merchandise to help promote and fundraise for FIF, plus we launched a fresh new website, which is easier to navigate and includes all new content.



GREEN SPACE

PARTNERSHIPS & ENGAGEMENT

We hosted many school tours, tours for community groups, special projects with organisations such as Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council, Playgroup Victoria, Uniting (Barnagren Youth Residential Mental Health Recovery Wellbeing Services), City of Ballarat Youth Services, and Ballarat East Town Hall Gardens Restoration Committee.

We also sent monthly e-newsletters to our subscribers to keep them informed of what has been happening at FIF.

As part of our work, we built a strong new partnership with City of Ballarat Libraries, (in particular Sebastopol Library), which will be ongoing and collaborative, plus importantly, will particularly target disadvantaged members of a low-socio economic section of our city.

We look forward to furthering a terrific new relationship with Ballarat Group Training and Ballarat East Neighbourhood House, and the many tenants at Barkly Square in Ballarat East.

LOU & MATTHEW EVANS AT LANEWAY



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VOLS ORIENTATTION

GRANTS

FIF Director Lou Ridsdale successfully secured many grants on behalf of FIF, including the following:

- Heywire FRRR Foundation Youth Grant \$9,904
- Children's Week: Little Sprouts kids gardening workshop \$1K
- Education Week: to host 5 school tours of our sites \$2K
- VicHealth Jump Start: to deliver 12 kids gardening workshops over 12 months \$38K
- Highways & Byways Mental Health: event grant \$3K
- Bulk Nutrients grant: for venue hire \$1K
- Stocklands grant : for Little Sprouts kids gardening workshop \$1K
- Central Highlands Water grant: for kids gardening event \$500
- Vic Youth Fest 2022 Event \$2K



A VERY SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEER TEAM...

The FIF Board extends a heartfelt and sincere thank you to our volunteers and our wonderful Volunteer Manager Virginia Wilson. Thank you, all. Like many organisations, we saw a dip in our volunteer numbers during the past couple of years (down to 60, from 70). Many of our volunteers were older or elderly, and as such many of them chose not to return to volunteering in order to keep away from crowds and protect themselves from COVID-19. While this was challenging from a volunteering perspective, we sought to build new connections with potential volunteers and by the end of the financial year we had a total of 80 volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds and ages.

SUPPORTERS

The Board also thanks these organisations who donated time, expertise and work to FIF, for which we are exceptionally grateful:

- 15 Trees
- Ballarat Insurance Brokers
- Business Story Lab
- Carli Lamb
- City of Ballarat
- Grounded Pleasures
- Hoselink
- Inspire HQ
- Kelsie White Studios
- Kitteltys
- Lateral Plains
- Michael Unwin Wines
- Munash Organics
- Real Accounting Solutions
- Seasol
- The Polish Beekeeper



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE...



The Board is focused on ensuring FIF is ready to enter into the next stage of growth – sustainably. This includes turning our minds to ways to focus our efforts, support fundraising towards our work and better support the communities we serve. 2022-23 will no doubt be a busy year for FIF, and we very much look forward to it.