

## Annual Plan 2023

### Marlborough Farmers Market

#### Introduction

This paper covers the importance of the Farmers Market for Marlborough's community, tourism, regional food security and start-up businesses. It highlights that the market suffered some financial setbacks as a result of Covid, as a consequence the market is undergoing regeneration. It has formulated a vision to see it through for the next 10 years. A new market layout is a key contributor to realising the vision. The new layout also addresses a number of historical issues, Health and Safety issues, future growth whilst ensuring the market remains a great place for families to gather, shop and support local businesses. Whilst the market only trades on a Sunday it remains important to our local economy and the Region as a weekly free to attend event that attracts over 1000 visitors per week. Achieving change will need blessing and assistance from Marlborough District Council. The existing lease expires in September, amending this to reflect the future market needs would be welcomed. A new layout will require some infrastructure changes and we trust the Council will see the benefit to the greater Marlborough District and fund the changes.

#### Background

Started in 2002 Marlborough Farmers Market is one of the oldest farmers markets in the country. As a weekly event operating 12 months of the year, it is a major contributor to the vitality of Marlborough's tourism and community. With an average attendance of over 1000 per week going up to 2500 in the height of the season it is a significant and one of Marlborough's largest free to attend events.

The Market has been showcased on Country Calendar and The New Zealand Food Story on a number of occasions. It has helped launch and maintain numerous food businesses in the region. It is a true asset for the region.

Through the years it has seen peaks and troughs in terms of financial performance, Covid – 19 was the cause of its most recent trough. Recently a new Market Committee was appointed to revitalise the market and improve financial performance. Key targets include increase stall numbers, increase variety of stall offerings, increase visitor numbers and to improve the market's financial position.

#### Terms of trade

The market operates as a member of Farmers Markets New Zealand (FMNZ). As a membership organisation FMNZ supports around 25 authentic independently owned farmers markets. FMNZ's aims include clearly defining the concept of a Farmers Market and to advocate on behalf of its members at a national level (FMNZ sits at the same table as the supermarkets). An authentic Farmers Market is defined as one where 70% of stallholders are primary producers of food produced in a defined local area.

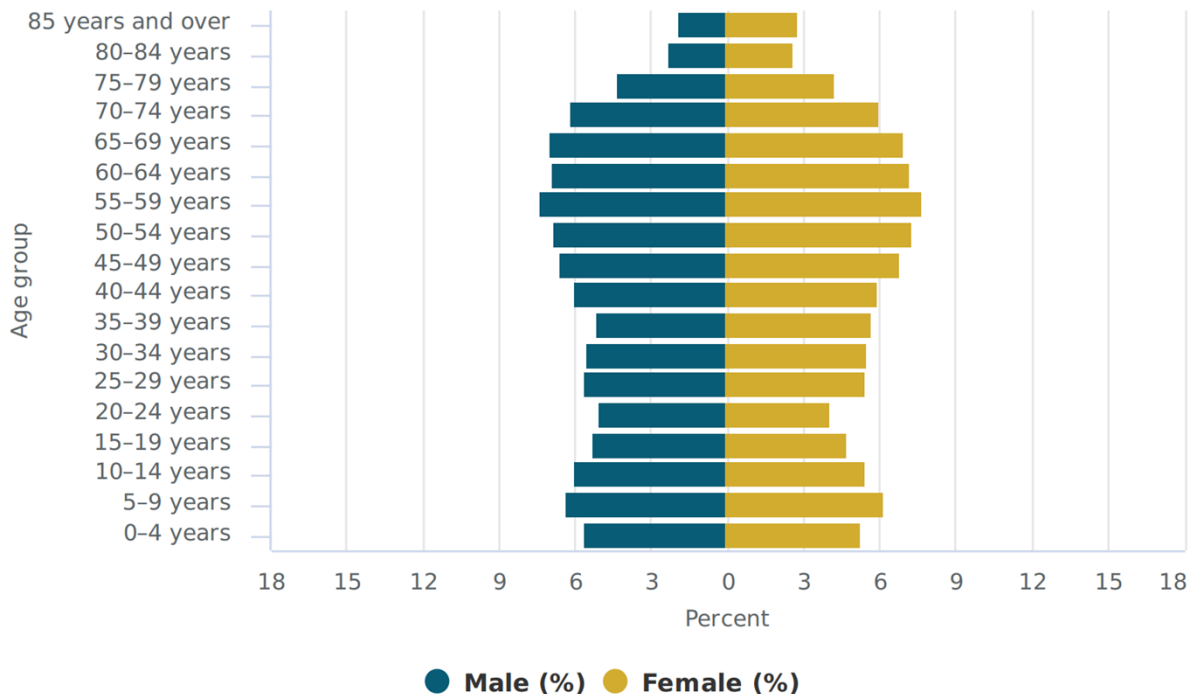
#### Population

Based on 2018 statistics data the Marlborough region has a population of 47,340 (June 2022 estimates the population to be 51,900) of this some 29,000 live in Blenheim, 2,600 in Renwick and 5,000 in Picton. Generally, the population is largely NZ European (6,300 Māori), equally balanced male to female and with a median age of 45.5 years. 22% of the population is aged over 65 years compared to 15% of New Zealanders. By 2048 it is expected that 1/3 of Blenheim residents will

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be over 65. The Market aims to cater to a broad spectrum of the population with a focus on community.

## Age and sex of people in Marlborough Region, 2018 Census



See metadata tab for information about variables and quality.

### Market attendance

Market weekly attendance collected at the market indicated an attendance of around 1000 people. This makes the market the largest weekly event in the region. The demographic of attendance includes families young adults meeting up with friends, tourists and vineyard workers. It has been identified people attending often attend to either do their shopping or come to meet with friends and family. The aim is to ensure the market is a great experience for both purchasing local produce and socialising. Head counts indicated an average attendance of 1300 per week. The committee has established an initial target of 1500 (Average) visitors per week with a long term target of an average of 2000 per week.

### Financial position

The Markets fees for stallholders is scaled according to takings, this ensures it is affordable for and attractive for new stalls. The market employs a number part time staff and its Committee is made up of stall holders whose contribution is unpaid.

A survey recent carried out at the market showed a spend of \$38650 with an attendance of 2000 people which gives an average spend per person of \$19.50.

Before Covid the market was in a strong stable financial position as a minimum profit organisation. However over the last three years the Markets financial position has declined during Covid and the markets financial support of the stallholders. Whilst this calendar year has seen improvement on its

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financial performance, retuning to health profits will take time. A number of reviews are underway to improve the financial position and see the market return to profit.

The Marlborough Farmers' Market has worked hard to achieve a sustainable market position over the 6 years leading up to the period of Covid. Its financial position improved some 300% over this period with net financial assets of \$20k as of 31 March 2014 to \$62K as at 31 March 2020. March 2021 saw a decline to \$56k with steady declines in the 2 years since. This decline was mainly due to the market supporting its members during the Covid period by reducing stall fees (stall fees are the only revenue of the market) and increased costs of running the market due the enforced restrictions. However in the past 6 months this has shown to be turning around with the markets performing financially better than expected.

During Covid our stallholder attendance showed a similar trajectory with numbers dropping this has been made worst with road closures to Nelson and increased fuel cost that has made the journey uneconomical for several stall holders. In the past 4 months the stall numbers are slowly increasing

Our statistics however show that our Brand and Customer base remain very strong. Over Covid period we recorded an average of 1000 per Sunday. At a count on 25 September 2022, 959 customers entered the Market . Recently counts have shown between 1200 and 1600 per Market with a peak on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2023 with an estimated 2000 people attending that day.

## **Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats**

### **Strengths**

- Free to attend.
- A diverse and wide spectrum of people attending both locals and tourists.
- Celebrates produce from the "top of the south" island.
- Freshest local produce, direct from the grower/maker.
- Inclusive to all to attend.
- Strong national brand and structure.
- Opportunity to meet the growers.
- Improves and provides resilience towards regional food security.
- Supports a number of growers and producers (business) in the Region with a successful market outlet for them.
- Supports business starting out with a marketplace for them to sell from and establish their brand.
- Economically, money spent at the market generally remains in the Region.

### **Weakness**

- Not attractive to stall holder from Nelson (due to travel time and financial returns)
- Not attractive for major Marlborough primary produces. E.g. Cloudy Bay Clams etc.
- Misperception that the market is elitist and expensive.

### **Opportunities**

- Showcase "top of the South" produce
- Premier multi-generational event
- National recognition as a benchmark market
- Premier market for stall holders

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## Threats

- Stall holders moving to other local markets
- Loosing prime producers in Marlborough particularly vegetable growers
- Stall holders are aging need to encourage the next generation of stall holders
- Lack of diversity and offering of produce resulting in reduced attendance

## 10-year Vision

The following vision will guide the market for the next 10 years.

The vision is to:

Create a vibrant, community focused market that showcases the best seasonal food grown produced in Marlborough, that is high quality and affordable. The market will be financially and physically sustainable. Providing a platform for its members to sell their goods that is economically viable for them whilst being an entry point for new producers starting up. A market that the Region is proud of and regularly attends.

The vision is founded on;

### 5 Pillars;

- Regeneration
  - Increase the number of stalls regularly attending the market throughout the year
  - Encourage the next generation of stall holders particularly vegetable and fruit stall holders.
  - Encourage a strong connection with major producers in the Region particularly the seafood producers to showcase the Region.
  - Restructure the layout to future proof the market for the next 10 years
  - Reconnect the stall holders as members of the market to give them greater ownership of the market and running of the market and its future direction.
- Experience
  - Provide customers with a vibrant experience that meets their needs and expectations.
  - Provide the stall holders with a venue that meets their needs and expectations that is also both vibrant and fun to attend.
- Finance
  - The market is run as a minimum profit organisation that is financially sustainable using robust business practices and procedures. Whilst not comprising on meeting the needs of the members and the customers and remaining inclusive for all.
- Customer focused
  - The market is run focusing on the needs of the customer and stall holder and their overall experience at the market.
- Community
  - Foster a strong relationship with local community and charity organisations to help provide them a venue to raise awareness and money to help their cause.
  - Provide the local community with access to fresh high quality products at affordable prices.

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- A strong internal sense of community amongst the stall holders.

## **Design Principals to achieve the vision:**

- A robust foundation that will put the market in a strong position for the next 10 years.
- A strong governance structure underpinned with supporting policies and procedures.
- Vibrant environment for both customers and stallholders
- Safe place for families
- Rich mix of produce
- Non-elitist
- Inclusive for all
- Sustainable (Environmentally, Financially, Physically)

## **Indicators that we are on the way to success:**

- Happy vibrant feel to the market
- Regular community and charity events integrated into market days
- National recognition as a benchmark market
- Strong presence of major local brands/products at the market
- Known as the place to meet and socialise on weekends
- Long list of local applicants wanting to attend the market in future

## **Layout**

The Market Committee has recognised a need for a new market layout, key drivers are Health and Safety, room to expand and contract to meet the needs of the market for the next 10 years. We have designed a layout that accommodates growth, offers flexibility, cohesion and a greater sense of community for visitors and stall holders. The new layout considers linkages and flow between inside (the sheep shed) and outside areas. As of March 2023 a new layout was implemented. We consider this layout as an interim step to achieving a final and preferred layout. Achieving the final layout will require assistance from Marlborough District Council.

Feedback to date indicates that the interim layout is working well and is a significant improvement on the historic layout. However the ability to cater for a full complement of current stalls and growth is restricted by a number of constraints within the park.

There are several constrains that prevent the Market for achieving the preferred layout and to ensure the market runs successfully with respect to Health and Safety, access and provision of basic infrastructure items.

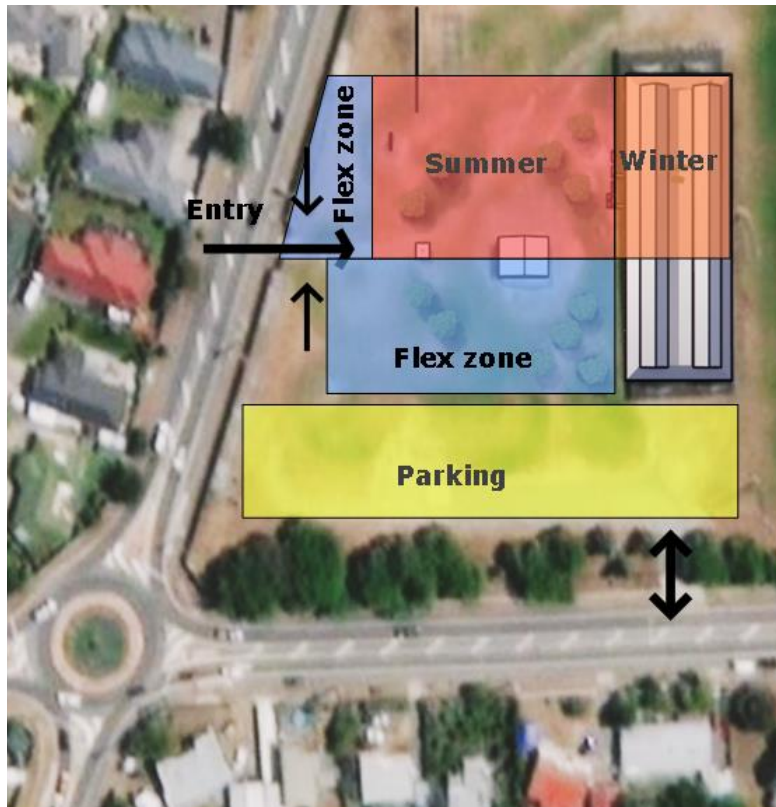
Requirements for running a successful market.

- Safe access to power and water
- Access to WC's
- Safe sealed parking with proper road/parking markings
- Separated vehicle pedestrian access to provide safe access to the market of Alabama Road.
- Secure storage space
- Wayfinding signage
- A functional up to date lease agreement

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Constraints to achieving the preferred layout include.

- Location of AMP loading dock
- AMP washdown area
- Dedicated Bicycle parking area
- Easy access to WC's
- Location of secure storage
- Separated vehicle pedestrian access to provide safe access to the market



Masterplan for new Farmers Market layout

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Masterplan for new Farmers Market layout

### Support needed from Marlborough District Council

**Lease / consent** – adjust to allow for Twilight market at Christmas and 12 other twilight markets per year. Increase stall maximum to 50 stalls. Include access to power and water supply.

**Pedestrian Access** – Currently this is a health and safety risk with the possible collision between pedestrians and vehicles entering and leaving the market. Establish a separate pedestrian access to the east of the vehicle crossing and gates off Alabama Road

**Sealed Parking** – off Alabama Road, parking area should be properly sealed and marks to allow visitors to use the carpark without assistance from MFM staff. A sealed carpark would benefit both market and other MP Park users. This area will provide a safer parking area for people attending the market particularly those with young children. It will also provide a more robust parking surface during periods of wet weather.

**Bicycle parking area** – several visitors arrive on bicycles it would be useful to have bicycle parking available for their use. The location of this should be considered so that it could benefit other AMP Park users.

**Secure storage area** – We currently use space within the sheep pen building for storage, when the building is refurbished, we expect our storage area will be reviewed, Ideally a new dedicated storage area outside the Sheep pen building will be provided by the landlord. We understand AMP are seeking a dedicated storage building, our need could be incorporated into that facility.

**Relocation of AMP Loading dock and washdown area-** The location of the sheep sheering building was a major factor in determining the need for a new market layout. The new layout includes the building as opposed to attempting to work around it. The intent of the new layout is to offer

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seasonal flexibility to accommodate number of stall holders and anticipated visitor numbers. To ensure a great atmosphere as maintained the market size needs to expand and contract. Currently the loading dock and wash down area is preventing this from being achieved. The load dock needs to be reduced in half and lower loading cleared away and grassed. The wash down area needs to be relocated to the other side of the loading ramp. This has been agreed with the AMP Committee. The reshaping of the loading dock and washdown area will give the market the opportunity maintain cohesion and expand towards or away from Maxwell Road.

**Contribution towards the cost of removing the temporary access way** – During Covid and with the councils blessing the market implemented a one-way system which included a internal one way traffic management system. This introduces an internal vehicle access way. As the access way is outside our lease agreement and not permitted within the councils' bylaws, we were instructed to stop using it and restore the ground to its original condition. Given that the access way was a direct response to Covid management and in the interest of meeting Government guidelines for the management of primary industry sales venues we feel funding should be available for making good. We therefore seek a significant contribution or a full refund for the cost to make good.

## Cost Benefit

The following list has been set out in order of priority and into 3 phases. The first phase needs to be done in the next 6 months. Phase 2 needs to be done in the next 12 to 24 months. Phase 3 needs to be completed within the next 36 months. As the landlord will need to enter into contracts for works commissioned on the property we have not sought costing advise form a cost consultant. We believe the landlord should commission and manage cost advisory for the works.

Priority for MFM	Item	Benefit	Phase
1	Pedestrian Access	Separation of vehicle and pedestrian access off Alabama Road to reduce the risk of collision therefore improving health and safety of the site	1
2	Relocation of AMP Loading dock and washdown area-	Improved market flexibility to ensure viability of market into the future	1
3	Sealed Parking	Improved health and Safety and available for other users of AMP Park	3
4	Secure storage area	Improved security and reduced risk of vandalism This will also need to be tied in with the refurbishment of the sheep shed.	2
5	Bicycle parking area to align with	Improved health and	



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	MDC ESD Policies	safety and available for other users of AMP Park	3
6	Contribution towards the cost of removing the temporary access way across the site put in during Covid	The old road poses a health and safety risk as it is uneven and slippery when wet. Ensure financial viability of MFM	1
7	Lease and consent adjustment	Alignment with actual and proposed trading	1

### Summary

The Marlborough Farmers Market is an important venue in Blenheim. Whilst it is equal to a supermarket it stronger in a number of areas in that it provided locally grown high quality fresh produce, it supports local growers and produces, it gives access to the market place to established business as well as start-up businesses and is integral in achieving a strong regional food security structure.

The Market has identified that it needs to regenerate to remain fresh and vibrate. It has already successfully started this process with an increase in new stall holders and people attending the market. It also understands the importance of encouraging the next generation of stall holders and customers to enable continued future growth into the future.

In the short term the Market needs to achieve these proposed infrastructural changes this will allow the market to achieve a layout that addresses H&S concerns and a foundation for the market to work from for the next ten years. Throughout the development of this plan we have been in consultation with the A&P Committee through their Chairperson. All changes are fully support by the A&P Committee. This plan will require support from the Marlborough District Council in the short term financially and continued engagement with various Council departments to achieve the on going potential return for both the local community and the wider Region.