Freshcare

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Purpose | Governance | Sustainability

Annual Review

Introduction and Acknowledgement of Country

Freshcare is an Australian owned and operated organisation, created to serve our fresh produce and wine grape industries. Our purpose is to ensure our bestpractice standards and services meet the industries' needs now, and for the future, to safeguard Australian producers, industry and consumers. Over the past year Freshcare has further developed and implemented partnerships and initiatives, delivering greater recognition of our certification programs within regulatory frameworks, and domestic and global market supply chains. Taking us closer to our 2030 Vision, our strategic plan has provided a roadmap to deliver a sustainable future for Australian producers and supply chains, through continuing innovation and services to support our robust and trusted certification systems.

The Freshcare Board and team look forward to another year ahead supporting our national network of growers, supply chain and wine businesses. We value the critical input our participants provide us to effectively engage with the challenges and opportunities our industry faces.

In the spirit of reconciliation, Freshcare acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Message from the Chairperson

Freshcare producers are passionate about growing safe, healthy, nutritious, and diverse food that is accessible for our consumers now and into the future – but they need to be resilient.

Over the past 12 months resilience has been cited in varying spaces by government and industry, but what does this have to do with Freshcare? To me, resilience is the ability to survive and thrive in challenging times. It's about shortening deficits during times of change where producers are suffering shocks and stresses to their production, farming environment and livelihoods.

As Freshcare progresses and grows we further realise our 2030 Vision, which support participants to build resilience and longevity for our industry. Our strategic plan is about changing up what we do - offering a suite of innovative products and services to benefit our participating businesses and certification pathways tailored to individual needs. I am proud to Chair an organisation which adapts and transforms to growing challenges facing our producers. Freshcare enables resilience and innovation in the horticultural and wine grape supply chains and supports producers to reach their global potential. I would like to add my sincere thanks to the Freshcare Board, our CEO Jane Siebum and the amazing Freshcare team for their dedication and commitment to bringing our 2030 Vision to life.

I look forward to another productive year ahead for the Freshcare team working with our participants and the horticulture, viticulture, and wine industries.



Belinda Hazell OAM

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Message from the CEO

A Year in Review

I am constantly impressed with Freshcare participants ability to provide Australian consumers with safe, top-quality produce even under the most difficult circumstances, and the past year has been no exception. Freshcare participants across the horticulture, viticulture and wine industries have consistently gained certification, assuring the future and security of our industry despite the ongoing challenges.

The Freshcare team have continued to support our large co-hort of participants Australia-wide. I am proud to lead a team who are knowledgeable and passionate about delivering the best possible outcomes for our growers and businesses. As always, we are planning for a secure future for our participants and will invest in addressing the needs and requirements for businesses to meet the expectations of their customers and regulations.

Achievements and Partnerships

Freshcare actively consulted with Food Standards Australian and New Zealand (FSANZ) and states, territories and agriculture departments represented in the review of food safety measures for primary production and processing of berries, leafy vegetables and melons under Proposal P1052. We will continue to collaborate with these agencies to ensure legislation recognises existing Freshcare certification.

I'd also like to acknowledge our strengthening partnership with Sustainable Winegrowing Australia (SWA) over the past year. After many years of working

certification pathway for the program, the Sustainable Winegrowing Australia Trustmark has gained momentum and global recognition.

It marks an important step towards securing domestic and international markets for our country's incredible sustainable wine products. Once again forefront of innovation and sustainability.

This year in partnership with the Australian Macadamia Society, we delivered real and practical outcomes for Macadamia growers, by developing commodity specific resources. We welcome opportunities for other single crop commodity groups to take part in this initiative.

Future Opportunities

As we move into another productive vear, Freshcare will deliver on several key strategic projects to build on the value we provide our participants. Our Supply Chain Standard (Edition 2) is now well underway for Global Food Safety international market options for supply chain businesses. This year will also see the launch of our Digitised Compliance Journey; the development of a certification pathway for new growers in response to P1052; and the release of marketing kits for Freshcare participants and stakeholders.

We look forward to strengthening our relationship with industry through future partnerships and projects. Having gathered over 21 years of data, Freshcare can demonstrate the consistent and tireless

work of our grower's commitment to food safety, environmental best practice, and sustainable development.

I'd like to thank the Board for their continued support and insights, helping to shape the future of Freshcare and our contribution to industry. Thank you also to the Information Technology (IT) Consultative Committee, Technical Working Groups and Freshcare Staff for their expertise and valuable contribution to our organisation.

Freshcare will continue to collaborate with industry and government to provide solutions for Australian producers and supply chain businesses, supporting their inherent care and stewardship of our

Jane Siebum

CEO



Belinda Hazell Chairperson Board member since: 2003



The Board

Allan Dall Deputy Chairperson Board member since: 2012



Gail Woods

Financial Risk Audit *Committee Chairperson* Board member since: 2016



Deputy Chairperson Board member since:



Dominique Doyle Board member since:



David Daniels Board member since: 2018

Who runs Freshcare?

Freshcare is governed by a Board comprising of six Directors. The overarching objective of the Directors is to represent and serve the interests of members, with full transparency over decision making. The Freshcare Board provides strategic guidance, promotes ethical and responsible decision making, identifies and manages risks, and implements good corporate governance structures.



Learn more about the value of Freshcare

Delivering to Industry

Maintenance, management, benchmarking and accreditation processes for the Certification Standards, support resources, and training materials.

Marketing and promotion of the value of certification increasing recognition in areas outside market access, including insurance, lenders, councils.

Representation of industry across technical working groups focussing on food safety, environmental management, sustainability, traceability, trade, and export.

Government advocacy at local, state, and federal levels.

20+ years of national certification experience and farming data.

Why is Freshcare critical to Industry?

Consistency across food safety practices which *maintain our domestic* industry's reputation for high quality produce and health of consumers

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Freshcare Standards encourage industry compliance through comprehensive programs, developed by industry

Freshcare provides growers and businesses with assurance consistency and convenience with our "one-stop-shop" for certification

As a not-for-profit Freshcare is motivated to provide accessable products for growers and businesses, to create a level playing field for all participants

Freshcare is Australian owned and recognised for promoting the best interests of the grower

Supporting Freshcare Participants

- Advocates on behalf of growers and businesses to industry.
- Provides access to flexible E-learning, program resources, technical support and approved trainer network.
- Opportunity for businesses to access a broader domestic and international markets enabling diversification of business income streams.
- Experienced on the ground knowledge and domestic based ົດ customer service.
- Access to Employee Assistance Program, providing resources and free counselling support services for all participating businesses; their families and staff.
- Provides directory of Recognised Suppliers. FR

What Freshcare's Sustainability Data Set Project means for you

The Sustainability Data Set Project will map the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal criteria to the specific compliance elements of the Freshcare Standards. This will provide verifiable evidence that Freshcare certification supports recognised achievements against set key criteria in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The Sustainability Data Set Project will allow for Freshcare certified participant data and compliance elements to be mapped to any sustainability framework developed for the agriculture sector.

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sustainability

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Freshcare standards

Aligned to

Freshcare is seeking investment and funding to support the delivery of this project.

softability - Vitrop

Chain Stan

Freshcare Best Practice

Managemen

Environment

Find out how your existing certification already meets the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals



Participant Snapshot 2021 - 2022

3,900 certified businesses









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Message from the Finance Risk and Audit Committe Chairperson

As an organisation registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), revenue generated from participation in the Freshcare Standards and services, serves to enable Australian producers access to global markets.

Proceeds are invested into the continual management and development of Freshcare Standards, training and resources to ensure our domestic produce is safe, sustainable and of the highest quality.

The Freshcare Finance, Risk and Audit Committee (FRAC) is a sub-committee of the Board. The committee plays a critical role advising the Board and supporting the fulfillment of responsibilities which include financial reporting and internal controls, risk management systems, and the audit function.

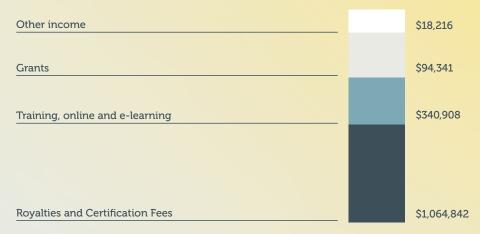
During the past 12 months Freshcare's FRAC has remained committed to developing and strengthening the organisation's confidence and capabilities to support industry members, certified businesses, and stakeholders. Cybersecurity risk remains a key item on the committee's agenda as Freshcare holds 21 years certification data which could cause disruption if misused, unavailable or corrupted. We continue to implement robust mitigation and action plans across the organisation.

As we continue to implement the 2030 Vision, good governance of the projects that will see strategic initiatives delivered remains a high priority for FRAC. Financial oversight, risk assessment, mitigation and benefits realisation tracking are long standing items that FRAC review on a regular basis.

I thank my fellow committee members for their work and support over the period. I also thank Jane Siebum, Freshcare CEO and the Freshcare team for their collaboration and diligence in supporting the committee.

Gail Woods

Revenue 2021 - 2022



Expenses 2021 - 2022

Staff Training/Travel/Accommodation	\$39,776
Accounting/ Banking / Legal / Insurance	\$39,797
IT Support	\$47,812
Governance / Strategy / Marketing	\$166,894
External Support	\$177,095
Administration	\$1,023,289

New Resources For Single-Crop Growers

Freshcare, in partnership with the Australia Macadamia Society (AMS) has developed a framework to simplify the process for singlecrop producers to successfully meet Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) certification requirements.

Global benchmarking of our standard has broadened Australian growers' recognition and access to international markets. However, some of the certification requirements have become onerous for growers of a single crop. In response to this feedback, Freshcare has worked with the macadamia industry to develop specific tools and resources customised for their crop. These commodity-based resources specifically assist Macadamia growers meet the implementation, preparation for audit, and ongoing record keeping requirements of the Freshcare standard.

We are currently piloting the resources with macadamia growers in Northern Rivers NSW and look forward to expanding the program to other single commodity groups of growers. Developed together with macadamia growers and suppliers, AMS outgoing CEO Jolyon Burnett says commodity specific certification resources are an important initiative. "As supply increases and competition between origins heats up, our regulatory framework and record on food safety will become even more important as a competitive advantage," he said.

Mr Burnett says while the certification program has been challenging for some macadamia growers, its rigour is its strength and creating the new resources has received positive feedback from producers.

"We need to be very careful, when we try and simplify the system, we do not weaken it. Having been through the process with the Freshcare team and some industry participants I am very confident that we have struck the right balance here. "...the grower liaison officers and growers who were part of developing the new system have been very enthusiastic about the reduction in complexity and the focus on those parts of the program, that are most relevant to macadamias," he said.

Total Freshcare Certified Particpants (Macadamia Nuts)

63

2021 - 2022 Participants Snapshot (Food Safety & Quality)



Partnerships

Seventh generation grower Joel Chambers is passionate about sustainable practices and farming. As Farm and Vineyard Manager of the family run Lake Moodemere Estate in Rutherglen, a regional town in north-east Victoria, Joel is an integral member of the business. We chatted to Joel about becoming Freshcare certified and the partnership with Sustainable Winegrowing Australia.

Why did you decide to become certified?

We initially decided to become certifed back in 2018. A buyer of ours made us aware that sometime down track, all their growers would be required to be certified.

How have you found the process?

I personally have found the entire process very informative and rewarding. I found that from a viticultural perspective we were and have been practicing sustainable techniques for nearly 200 years, so that was good reassurance that we are on the right path!

The documentation side of certification was something we, as a business, really needed to neaten up and formalize. Having solid templates provided by Sustainable Winegrowing Australia and Freshcare, with step-by-step instructions was helpful to me.

What were surprising and positive things you learned from undergoing an audit?

The sustainable certification audit was the very first I have undertaken so everything was a surprise to me. I suppose there where some off target areas uncovered during the audit, which ended up been helpful as far as biosecurity is concerned.

A positive outcome is that they don't just give you a straight up fail if something is not quite right. Instead, a corrective action is issued, and a period of time is given to correct that area, without the need for a second audit.

Why do you think being certified Sustainable is important for Lake Moodemere and the Australian wine industry?

Certification has and will become vital for all grape growers and winemakers in Australia, so to jump on board early and get it done is a huge advantage to us. It's extremely important for small producers to prove their credentials against the corporate producers.

We are lucky in the way that we are a small diverse business because it gives us the scope to experiment and play around outside of the conventional viticulture area.

What advice would you give to growers and winemakers who are considering certification?

Complete your training, sort out the paperwork and just book an audit. Don't get hung up on the finer details of certification, don't try to reinvent the wheel. Your first audit will shine a light on areas of non-compliance and that will save you heaps of time because you can just fix those areas up, submit the evidence that they're all good, and you'll get your certification.

In partnership with



SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING AUSTRALIA



Connecting With Our Supply Chain

Over the past 12 months fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain businesses have faced significant challenges due to COVID, flooding, fuel price increases and labor shortages. Our supply chains play a critical role in assuring the future of our industry and consumer access to our incredible, locally grown produce. Earlier this year Freshcare, with the support of the NSW Government Small Business Month Program, held a breakfast networking event to connect with hard working business owners working out of Sydney Markets. It was a great opportunity to connect and discuss the industry and the needs of Freshcare certified small to medium businesses within our local area of operation. Additionally, we helped some supply chain businesses begin their Freshcare and training and certification journey.

We would also like to thank all the guests and industry organisations who attended and promoted our event, it was great to meet in person again.

We're hoping to meet our supply chain business owners and operators throughout Central Markets locations throughout 2023.

Watch this space!

Freshcare has been progressing its benchmark of the Supply Chain Standard (Edition 2) to the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI). Our benchmark progress can be monitored at <u>mygfsi.com</u>

This process commenced to ensure ongoing domestic and international market acceptance of our Supply Chain Standard and certified businesses. Our benchmarking is scheduled for completion by GFSI in early 2023.

> Unlike other standard providers covering the supply chain, Freshcare is Australian owned, operated and governed. Our staff are industry experts with domestic knowledge, having worked in the horticulture sector for many years.



Images courtesy of Raw Fresh



Market Floor - Freshcare Training Supports Certification - Raw Fresh

Raw Fresh has operated since 2013, as a wholesaler business in Sydney Markets, when James Kohler, Glen Polinelli and Joe Vella decided to join forces to expand their opportunities. Raw Fresh supplies fresh produce to independent retailers and providores across the whole Australian east coast. Co-director James Kohler says it was important for the medium to large wholesalers to be certified from the beginning. "It's more important even now, as people want to safeguard their food and traceability."

More recently Raw Fresh Quality Assurance Manager, Gayan Kandambi, undertook Freshcare certification training for Supply Chain Standard Edition 2. Gayan says implementing a widely accepted quality assurance system, such as Freshcare, has been important to the business's success.

"Freshcare has provided us with a foundation to build our quality assurance system and supply chain business," said Gayan. "Freshcare guidelines and principles are clear, easy to adopt and there are ample number of resources available through their websites and one-on-one training.

"We really like the e-learning platform as it provides our team members with flexible learning opportunities, and we are 100 per cent sure that we have taken the right decision by choosing Freshcare as our quality support program." Mental health & wellbeing counselling for Freshcare participants

Freshcare spoke with Jane Harris who, alongside her husband Dan, runs their farm Myrtle Park Produce in NSW Southern Riverina region.

Freshcare Certified since 2015, their medium-sized, 500-acre farms produce watermelons, pumpkins and mixed cropping. Like many Australian growers, they're faced with the ongoing pressures of regional living and farming. *Accessing Freshcare's free and anonymous mental health and wellbeing counselling services* during some tough times has provided Jane, her family and their staff some welcomed support.

Harvest had started and we were well into the festive season. Pressure was running high with lots of commitments and competing demands. I noticed that I was getting more frustrated than normal, I was snapping at the kids and generally feeling a bit 'fed up' which is not my usual state. I called MyCoach and made an appointment.

After the first conversation I felt lighter and more in control. Just having the conversation, putting words to my state of mind, made all the difference. I could see more clearly what I needed to do and was able to put some things in place to re-balance my world.

As a small business owner, implementing our own Employee Assistance Program would not be feasible. By including access through our Freshcare Certification, we are able to provide an excellent employee benefit typically reserved for big corporates. I see enormous benefit in the

corporates. I see enormous benefit in the program, particularly for rural and remote producers and growers. The immediate and online support available removes a barrier to accessing help.

We all need to look after our mental health and wellbeing. Being a producer/ grower has very unique challenges. We are often physically isolated on a farm, disconnected from other growers and producers.



Weather is unpredictable, one event can wipe out an entire year of production. Pests and disease can be uncontrollable, rendering your produce unsaleable. The list could go on! Having someone to support you through the tricky bits is essential to success.

The world's most elite athlete's always have a coach travelling with them to help them succeed, Benestar provides that for growers.

Volunteering with the SES

Freshcare CEO Jane Siebum, like many Australians, was shocked by recent extreme flooding events which greatly affected many growers and businesses in our industry. Our participants continue to face ongoing threat of flooding and weather events with courage, as a further season of heavy rain is predicted.

Inspired by the everyday Australians, many of whom supply our supermarket shelves with fresh, safe and high-quality produce, seen on the news and social media helping those in need, Jane joined the NSW State Emergency Services earlier this year.

"Seeing the floods in Lismore and Ballina in February made me realise that it is ordinary people who are out their helping, and for a small-time commitment on my behalf I could also help out in the future," she said. Undergoing 12 weeks of SES training at Menai Unit in Sydney, Jane has completed evening classes once a week, e-learning and First Aid training. Recently Jane assisted on call outs during Sydney's July storms, much of which was damage caused by fallen trees. Jane is continually inspired by the other volunteers she meets on the job. "They're really amazing and giving people," she said. "It's a very rewarding experience knowing that you are there to help where you can, as generally there is no one else people can turn to. It's also fantastic to see many younger generations volunteering for the SES."



Councillor for E Ward in the Sutherland SES Stephen Nikolovski & Jane Siebum

The Future of Online Training

In preparation for this year's Hort Connections industry conference, the Freshcare team developed a fun, interactive game focused on on-farm food safety requirements. 'Sure Thing' a play on the word 'assurance' was developed in-kind, by business and technology firm The Glue. The game asks the player to locate specific items and objects in and around the farm and packhouse, that must be considered as part of an on-farm food safety system.

The game was hit at this year's Hort Connections, with many players returning to take out the Fastest Player score, to take home our 'Connecting Communities' prize. Taking out the top score for Fastest Game Player was Annabella Radcliff.

Annabelle and her mum Heidi attended Hort Connections, traveling from Rhebanvale Tasmania, a family farm based in Wesley Vale, growing a variety of vegetable products. "I really loved playing the game - it was so much fun!! It was heaps more fun when I realised that I could get the highest score and I kept competing against two guys who also really wanted to win."

"I hope you have something like it again next year. Thanks, Freshcare - you made my visit really fun, and I learned heaps!" said Annabelle.

We are hoping to further develop a version 2.0 of 'Sure Thing' as we received positive feedback from auditors and Freshcare trainers, hoping to include this in their training practice. "Watch this space" for new updates and roll out later this year!



Award Winning Project: The Value of Freshcare

Freshcare engaged with students from Macquarie University Business School during the past year, as part of the Professional and Community Engagement program (PACE) to give graduating students realworld experience. Through the Applied Leadership Project, the student group were tasked with conducting a survey, which focused on our members and participating businesses.

The research project provided an industry value proposition for Freshcare, reporting on the perceived value of the organisation from a survey conducted with industry stakeholders.

As a result of the student's professionalism and high standard of work, they were awarded the PACE Student Leadership Prize, as part of the prestigious Macquarie University awards.

The team: Olivia Bailey, Brayden Dilley, Matthew Fakhoury, Ben Martin, and James Purkiss were chosen out of 7000 student participants and 1000 partners taking part in the PACE program. The prize recognises students who show outstanding leadership skills by managing or coordinating a group of students, managing a project, or using excellent skills in areas such as communication, problemsolving and relationship building.

Freshcare CEO, Jane Siebum attended the award ceremony, to congratulate the students on their achievement. "It's an honour to contribute to the process of education and learning for this group of talented students," said Ms Siebum. "This group of students were professional and dedicated to the project. They all have great potential in furthering their careers post-graduation." "Freshcare is focused on community, growth and sustainability of our industry and we hope to see some of these students working in horticulture, wine and grape professions in the future."

The project provided key insight into the value of Freshcare to participants and industry, which helped to steer the strategic focus of the organisation.

Smart Farming Future

Freshcare is part of the project to align data captured with record keeping requirements of our certification programs. It is important that smart solutions provide outcomes aligned to the farms existing systems. The Smart Farm* digital remote monitoring to improve horticultures' environmental performance project is a multi-stakeholder, multi-industry, collaborative project. Focused on building innovative digital smart farms, the project is targeting practice change to improve the soil and water resource management of horticultural industries in sensitive catchments across the Great Barrier Reef, QLD. We have been thrilled to see the project deliver decision support tools in the Hitachi Control Tower, being used by the pilot farms to inform business decisions on plant health, irrigation, and nutrient management.

As the project progresses, Freshcare is keen to explore added benefits to growers, including reduced time spent monitoring and record-keeping and increased efficiencies in system reporting and audit preparedness.

*This project has been funded by Hort Innovation from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program. Hort Innovation is the grower-owned, not-for-profit research and development corporation for Australian horticulture.



Gavin Devaney Bartle Frere Bananas - Boogan QLD. Images courtesy of AHR.

New Course Offerings

As Freshcare invests in opportunities to deliver new learning resources, we have partnered with Satinbird Education to create a unique short course offering – Assurance Essentials. After extensive consultation and User Acceptance Testing (UAT) with 15 industry professionals – we have created a user friendly, accessible e-learning resource which aims to upskill a broad range of personnel.

Assurance Essentials has been developed to support building knowledge and skills in the areas of records management, training and development, traceability, and audit processes. This course will benefit staff who are not directly responsible for the management of the Freshcare Program, but where their role requires them to have a general understanding this includes, packing shed and production line employees, supervisors, safety champions and administrative staff as well as non-Freshcare trained OA personnel.

Freshcare and Satinbird Education would like to thank all the UAT participants who contributed their valuable time and feedback to help us bring Assurance Essentials to industry.





Learn more about Freshcare's Recognised Suppliers



Our Recognised Supplier and Services Register provides Australian fresh produce and wine industry businesses with the opportunity to advertise services, while demonstrating their credentials which in turn support our industry.

As a Recognised Supplier businesses not only gain access to a dedicated horticultural and wine industry network, membership fees also contribute to health and wellbeing of growers, their families and workers across Australia through out Benestar program. Freshcare provides participants with free and anonymous mental health and wellbeing services such as access to psychologist, financial counsellors and coaching. Benestar services are 24/7 and available on phone, online and via text making mental health accessible to many of our growers in remote and regional areas.

Businesses listed as a Recognised Supplier or Service, gain the unique opportunity to promote and disclose the services they offer to industry and display evidence of how their business complies with relevant standards and/or achievements.



<u>Thank you</u>

Freshcare wish to thank the many industry organisations and individuals that have assisted and continue to support our 2030 Vision and strategic plan.

We'd also like to thank the following people and organisations that have contributed their time in-kind to support Freshcare during the year:

- Members of our Technical Steering Committees and the Information Technology Committee.
- Macquarie University PACE program facilitators, participating students and our incredible interns.
- Industry partners, including the AWRI and Fresh Produce Safety Centre.
- Owner Member CEOs for their ongoing support and commitment to Freshcare.

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