

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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Mr Tom Cosentino LLB, BComm

Executive Officer
Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee

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Report of Operations

Section 1: Year in Review

Responsible Body Declaration

In accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994*, I am pleased to present the Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2023.

Mick Molluso

Chairperson

Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee

Date: 23 August 2023

Subsequent events

There were no events occurring after balance date which may significantly affect the Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee's operations in subsequent reporting periods.

Manner of Establishment and Responsible Ministers

The Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee (VSIDC) is established by an Order under the auspices of the *Agricultural Industry Development Act 1990*. The responsible Minister for the reporting period was the Hon Gayle Tierney MP.

The Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Order 2014 (the Order) was renewed after a successful grower poll and will continue to operate for the four-year period 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2026.

The VSIDC was originally established in July 1992 for a period of four years and has been in continuous operation since its inception.

The VSIDC is responsible for administering a State-based grower charge to provide services for the advancement of research, development, and promotion of the Victorian strawberry industry.

Objectives and Functions

The objectives of the VSIDC are to:

- promote the best interests of the Victorian strawberry industry;
- improve the competitiveness of the Victorian strawberry industry; and
- provide the services of the Committee efficiently, effectively, and economically.

The VSIDC collects a grower charge from all Victorian commercial strawberry growers at the point of purchase of strawberry runner plants.

The VSIDC uses these funds to:

- carry out or fund research and development into the production, pest and disease control, postharvest handling, plant breeding and variety evaluation of strawberries, and advise growers about research findings; and
- carry out or fund domestic marketing and promotion of fresh strawberries grown in Victoria.

Chairperson's Report

Introduction

I am pleased to present the Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee's (VSIDC) Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2023. This is the thirtieth Annual Report of the VSIDC and my first as Chairperson, after taking over the role from John Frisina, who served on the Committee with distinction for almost two decades.

Taking a conservative approach

Labour availability and shortages, compounded with unique and challenging weather over the last growing season have led to a decrease in runners sold, and therefore a decrease in grower levies collected by the VSIDC in the 2023 financial year. The VSIDC has made a calculated decision to reduce expenditure on R&D and promotion activities in the 2024 financial year in order to consolidate income and allow for a larger portfolio of projects in the 2024 ballot for projects to be conducted in 2025.

We wait to see if any late plantings bring some stability to grower sales, which will hopefully be evident in the October grower levy receipts.

Acknowledgements

The VSIDC relies heavily on support provided by strawberry runner growers, who grow and sell strawberry runner plants and collect grower charges on the Committee's behalf. Without this assistance we would be unable to operate as efficiently as we do.

I wish to thank:

- George Weda of Toolangi Certified Strawberry Runner Growers Cooperative Ltd, Toolangi, Victoria, Wally and Leanne Sweet of Sweets Strawberry Runners Pty Ltd, Stanthorpe, Qld, and Jack Beattie from JCLM Farming Pty Ltd, Tasmania for collecting and remitting grower charges on time; and
- Horticulture Innovation Ltd (Hort Innovation) for their continued project funding support.

I would also like to thank my fellow committee members for their dedicated and committed voluntary efforts over the past 12 months. Committee members always graciously make themselves available and contribute to the smooth running of meetings. Finally, thanks to Tom Cosentino in his efforts to coordinate the delivery of the Committee's milestones and completing its compliance activities.

Mick Molluso Chairperson

Executive Officer's Report

The Victorian strawberry industry rises to challenge after challenge. In 2023, weather conditions and labour availability were front of mind and presented various issues for growers. These were reflected in the VSIDC's financials, with a much lower levy collection apparent this year. The Committee made the decision to conserve its cash balance by holding off on a project ballot for the 2024 financial year, instead opting for multiyear projects in the ballot for the current year.

The results of the project ballot for the 2022-23 period were as follows:

Targeted market development and promotion

The Marketing and Promotional Project continued again in the 2022-23 period, albeit at a slightly reduced scale to reflect the decrease in runner levy income. It continues to feature podcasts, virtual farm tours and social media collaboration with nutritionists and local identities. This project continues to be popular with growers and often attracts significant media value beyond the project's cost.

Industry Development Officer ('IDO')

Dr Angela Atkinson continued her engagement to provide Victorian specific Industry Development capabilities in addition to her work as the national temperate region Industry Development Officer. With the National IDO project funded by Hort Innovation Australia being rolled over for an additional four years, I look forward to working with Dr Atkinson into the future.

Integrated control of charcoal rot: Guiding adoption of best practice

This project will deliver the information Victorian strawberry growers need to control charcoal rot more effectively using integrated approaches of management. The project will combine five years of previous research on fumigant, non-chemical and cultural controls for charcoal rot into a single, easy-to-follow management guide for growers. The strawberry communication project will deliver the guide (booklet) and information to growers. It is anticipated that the project will increase the adoption of integrated management practices by growers and reduce the severity of charcoal rot in the Victorian industry. The guide is expected to be released in the second half of 2023.

Managing the risk of fumigant phytotoxicity

This project will evaluate in-field technologies (hand-held photoionisation devices and colorimetric tubes) to assist growers in knowing when they can plant their crops after fumigation to avoid phytotoxicity. The project will test the technologies in different soil types, moisture and organic matter contents, and temperatures at 30 commercial farms across Victoria. Field trials will also be conducted at two commercial farms in Victoria to determine the tolerance of different strawberry varieties to fumigant residues. If successful across multiple environments, it is anticipated that the technologies will be developed as a product or a service for growers. This project is due to be completed by 30 June 2024.

The VSIDC provides a unique and desirable opportunity for Victorian strawberry growers, and I would encourage all industry stakeholders to be engaged in the process of research, development, and promotions. I am always available to be contacted for questions, ideas, and feedback.

I would like to thank all committee members for their knowledge, guidance and ongoing support, and Dr Atkinson for her valued work as the industry's IDO.

I would like to thank Mick Molluso, the incoming Chair of the VSIDC, for volunteering his time to lead the Committee and Mauro De'Iulio for volunteering as the Committee's treasurer. They make an excellent team and the VSIDC continues to remain stable and efficient under their leadership.

Tom Cosentino
Executive Officer, Secretary and Chief Financial Officer

Treasurer's Report

The VSIDC has had a stable and consistent year from a financial standpoint. The most significant item to report is continued contraction in grower charges from runner sales, which totalled **\$156,881** during the reporting period (\$187,828 in 2021-22).

The VSIDC started the year with cash in the bank of **\$211,003** and finished the year with a slightly higher balance of **\$219,098**. This was primarily a result of the timing of grant milestone payments (*Please note that all financial figures in this report are exclusive of GST*).

Income

In 2022-23, the VSIDC received total income of **\$304,652** (\$289,612 in 2021-22). This income was received from the following sources:

- Grower charge receipts at the rate of \$12.00 per 1,000 plants from four certified strawberry runner growers totalling \$156,881 (\$187,828 in 2021-22);
- Payment from Berries Australia Limited (Hort Innovation Grant) for the industry development officer project of \$134,132 (\$95,000 in 2021-22). This value increased due to the timing of project Milestone payments, noting that the output has remained the same;
- Bank interest of \$7,639 (\$783 in 2021-22), increased due to increase in interest rates; and
- Miscellaneous income derived from sub-letting office space of \$6,000 (\$6,000 in 2021-22).

Expenditure

VSIDC expenditure for the financial year was \$346,912 (\$315,688 in 2021-22).

Key categories of expenditure included:

Administration and Corporate Expenditure

- \$65,000 (\$60,000 in 2021-22) for all costs associated with administering and managing the VSIDC, including fees paid to the contracted Executive Officer.
- \$9,748 (\$9,122 in 2021-22) for costs associated with office consumables, insurance, and other office related expenditure.
- \$11,000 (\$11,000 in 2021-22) for costs associated with the annual VAGO audit.
- There were no costs associated with Committee expenses, fees, and other charges (nil in 2021-22).

Industry Promotion and Public Relations

- The Marketing and Promotions Project represents \$53,000 of the VSIDC's overall budget during this reporting period (\$63,000 in 2021-22).
- Expenses of \$740 were incurred in relation to website expenses to support the Marketing and Promotions Project.

Research and Development

The VSIDC made payments totalling \$47,256 to VSICA Research Pty Ltd. These payments related to the newly contracted projects focused on managing the risks of fumigant phytotoxicity and the production of the charcoal rot best practice guide. These projects will be completed and delivered in the 2024 financial year.

The VSIDC made a payment of \$12,500 to the Victorian Strawberry Growers Association to conduct the 'Grower Needs Analysis' survey designed to increase engagement of strawberry growers in the region with R&D outcomes and extension.

VSIDC Reserve

The *Agricultural Industry Development Act 1990* requires the VSIDC to report its cash reserve. The VSIDC maintains a reserve so that emerging pest or disease outbreaks can be addressed in a timely manner. On 30 June 2023, the VSIDC had a bank balance of **\$219,098** (\$211,003 at 30 June 2022).

It is noted that the VSIDC reduced its year end liabilities by settling payables prior to 30 June 2023.

Conclusion

The current charge for service of \$12.00 per 1,000 runner plants is modest for what is achieved. For this small investment, growers are obtaining excellent advantages over other produce items that do not have an industry-based marketing, promotional, administrative, and R&D funding mechanism.

I am pleased to present a summary of the VSIDC's finances. I have no hesitation in recommending acceptance of the 2022-23 Financial Report and Statements.

Mauro De Iulio

Treasurer

Five Year Financial Summary

	2022-2023 (\$)	2021-2022 (\$)	2020-2021	2019-2020 (\$)	2018-2019 (\$)
Operating Revenue	156,881	187,828	205,316	211,716	210,455
Government Grants	134,132	95,000	106,050	142,909	105,562
Other Revenue	13,640	6,784	14,204	33,559	29,995
Total Revenue	304,653	289,612	325,570	388,184	346,012
Administration	11,069	11,074	13,277	13,341	17,466
Corporate Expenditure	74,678	72,170	65,154	70,891	75,647
Project Expenditure	261,164	232,444	238,013	277,722	237,281
Total Expenditure	346,911	315,688	316,444	361,954	330,394
Current Assets	319,297	359,969	385,502	373,503	348,441
Non-Current Assets	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total Assets	319,297	359,969	385,502	373,503	348,441
Current Liabilities	18,732	19,268	27,312	18,978	20,147
Non-Current Liabilities	10,714	8,587	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total Liabilities	29,446	27,855	27,312	18,978	20,147
Retained Earnings at End of Year	84,579	126,840	152,916	149,250	123,020
Cash at End of Year	219,098	211,003	224,804	229,133	216,458

Major Changes or Factors Affecting Performance

The reporting year has seen a continuance of a shortage of available labour. This shortage primarily impacts fruit harvest. The Committee has noted a reduction in producer charges collected, which is the flow on affect from a reduction in plantings to adapt to the reduction in labour availability. Weather conditions, particularly increased rainfall, impacted the ability of runner growers to produce runners resulting in customer orders being decreased. The VSIDC will continue to closely monitor production trends in the next growing season.

Significant Changes in Financial Position

There were no significant changes to the VSIDC's financial position during the reporting period.

Section 2: Governance and Organisational Structure

The Organisational Structure and Committee as of 30 June 2023

The VSIDC comprises six members nominated by the Victorian Strawberry Growers Association (VSGA), and one State Government appointee. The VSIDC also has one employee.

The VSGA may nominate four grower representatives and two industry representatives (non-growers) with specialist expertise appropriate to the needs of the strawberry industry. The VSIDC held two meetings, plus the AGM, in 2022-23.

Name of Committee member	<u>Term</u>	No of meetings attended (From a possible 2 held)
Dominic (Mick) MOLLUSO (Chairperson) (G)	1/7/2022 – 30/6/2023	2
Mauro DE'IULIO (Treasurer) (G)	1/7/2022 – 30/6/2023	2
Michael GANGI (I)	1/7/2022 – 30/6/2023	2
Scott CARTER (G)	1/7/2022 – 30/6/2023	<u>1</u>
Samuel Spirli (G)	1/7/2022 – 2/10/2022	<u>0</u>
Bronwyn KOLL (I)	1/7/2022 - 30/6/2023	<u>2</u>
Amanda ELLERY (GO)	1/7/2022 – 30/6/2023	<u>2</u>
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Key: G = Grower Representative I = Industry Representative GO = Government Observer

Committee Member Biographies:

Mick Molluso is the Managing Director of Sweet Berries P/L. After being involved in a number of industries, he decided to concentrate on growing strawberries, which he has now been doing for more than 30 years in Silvan. Mick loves the idea of consumers enjoying the fruit that his family works hard to grow. Mick is an innovative grower who embraces new ideas and technologies to produce quality fruit. In addition to the VSIDC, Mick is a committee member of the Victorian Strawberry Growers' Association.

Mauro De'Iulio owns Pamberries which he took over from his parents. It is a small family business, growing strawberries and capsicums for 25 years in Wandin. Mauro has been a VSIDC committee member for 7 years, and also a committee member of the Victorian Strawberry Growers' Association, a position he has held for more than 10 years.

Scott Carter graduated from the University of Waikato with a degree in sports science with a chemistry major. He has gone on to manage farms in New Zealand and Australia and is currently a farm manager and consultant.

Bronwyn Koll has been involved with farming in the heart of the Yarra Valley her whole life. Bronwyn was involved in her family orchard production from a very young age, working through high school years and then in between University studies.

Her interest in fruit production has continued with her and her own family, with her own blueberry production in amongst the nursery propagation business she shares with her partner, located in the Dandenong Ranges.

Michael Gangi is an agronomist with E. E. Muir & Sons, a role which he has held for 12 years. Michael also has a degree in Agricultural science from La Trobe University.

Amanda Ellery is the Manager – Agriculture Industry Development, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and is the appointed Victorian Government Observer on the Committee.

Other Attendees	<u>Term</u>	No of meetings attended (From a possible 2)
Dr Angela Atkinson (Strawberry IDO)	Ongoing	<u>2</u>
Tom Cosentino (Consultant Executive Officer)	Ongoing	<u>2</u>

All voting members have signed a declaration of pecuniary interests.

Dr Atkinson is employed by the VSIDC and is responsible for the extension of research to the Victorian Strawberry growing community. Her work overlaps the research, development and promotional activities carried out by the VSIDC under the Order. As such, she attends VSIDC meetings to provide an 'IDO Activity Summary'. She is employed on a full-time basis by the VSIDC, which is jointly funded through grower charges and Hort Innovation, through a subconsultancy agreement with Berries Australia Ltd.

Payment to Committee Members

Membership on the VSIDC is on a voluntary basis. The VSIDC membership have not sought to reimburse their expenses and therefore the Governor in Council has not set remuneration and allowances for members of the VSIDC. Accordingly, there were no payments made to VSIDC members during the reporting period.

Section 3: Workforce Data

Public Sector Values and Employment Principles

The VSIDC is committed to applying merit and equity principles when appointing staff. The selection processes ensure that applicants are assessed and evaluated fairly and equitably on the basis of the key selection criteria and other accountabilities without discrimination.

The VSIDC operates in accordance with public sector values of Responsiveness, Integrity, Impartiality, Accountability, Respect, Leadership and Human rights. The VSIDC maintains a register of possible or perceived conflicts of interest for its staff. Employees are required to act with the utmost integrity and objectivity at all times in all dealings.

Occupational Health and Safety

The VSIDC maintains a register of policies regarding occupational health and safety. The nature of the VSIDC's small workforce is reflected in the complexity of the policies. Policies include OH&S, sun protection, workplace bullying, smoking, alcohol and drugs, sexual harassment and first aid. Policies are reviewed annually at minimum, and or as required.

There were no OH&S incidents recorded during this and the previous reporting periods.

Comparative Workforce Data

On 30 June 2023:

- The VSIDC employed one staff member (1 full time equivalent), which remains unchanged as of 30 June 2022.
- The proportion of women was 100%, which remains unchanged as of 30 June 2022.

Employees have been correctly classified in workforce data collections.

	2022	2-23	2021-22		
Position Details	Number (headcount)	FTE	Number (headcount)	FTE	
Industry Development Officer	1	1.0	1	1.0	
Total	1	1.0	1	1.0	

	2022	2-23	2021-22		
Demographic Data	Number (headcount)	FTE	Number (headcount)	FTE	
Female	1	1.0	1	1.0	
Total	1	1.0	1	1.0	

Notes:

- FTE = Fulltime equivalent hours of work
- All figures reflect employment levels during the last full pay period in June of each year.

Section 4: Other Disclosures

Local Jobs First

The *Local Jobs First Act 2003* introduced in August 2018 brings together the Victorian Industry Participation Policy (VIPP) and Major Project Skills Guarantee (MPSG) policy which were previously administered separately. The VSIDC is required to apply the Local Job First policy in all projects valued at \$3 million or more in Metropolitan Melbourne or for state-wide projects, or \$1 million or more for projects in regional Victoria. MPSG applies to all construction projects valued at \$20 million or more. The MPSG guidelines and VIPP guidelines will continue to apply to MPSG applicable and VIPP applicable projects, respectively, where contracts have been entered prior to 15 August 2018.

During 2022-23, no VSIDC contracts were commenced to which the Local Jobs First Standard applied.

Government Advertising Expenditure

The VSIDC's expenditure in the 2022-23 reporting period on government campaign expenditure did not exceed \$100 000.

Consultancy Expenditure

Details of consultancies (valued at \$10,000 or greater)

In 2022-23, there were three consultancies where the total fees payable to each consultancy were \$10,000 or greater. The total expenditure incurred during 2022-23 in relation to all consultancies was \$112,756.00 (ex. GST).

Details of individual consultancies (valued at \$10,000 or greater) in 2022-23:

Consultant	Purpose of Consultancy	Start Date – End Date	Total approved Project Fee (ex. GST)	Expenditure 2022-23 (ex. GST)	Future Expenditure (ex. GST)
MarketMaker Pty Ltd	Annual Promotional Campaign	1/7/2022 - 30/6/2023	\$53,000	\$53,000	-
Victorian Strawberry Industry Certification Authority	Field research and development	1/7/2022 - 30/6/2024	\$71,561	\$47,256	\$24,305
Victorian Strawberry Growers Association	Survey and analysis of grower needs	1/7/2022 - 30/6/2023	\$12,500	\$12,500	-

All amounts were approved by the VSIDC and expended. Amounts include disbursements paid.

Details of consultancies (valued at less than \$10,000)

In 2022-23, there were no consultancies engaged during the year, where the total fees payable to each consultancy was less than \$10 000.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Expenditure

For the 2022-23 reporting period, the VSIDC had a total ICT expenditure of \$0.

'ICT expenditure' refers to VSIDC's costs in providing business enabling ICT services.

Disclosure of Major Contracts

The VSIDC did not enter into any major contracts (valued at \$10 million or more) during 2022-23.

Freedom of Information Act 1982

Victoria's *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) gives members of the public the right to apply for access to documents held by ministers, Victorian Government departments, local councils, public hospitals, statutory authorities, and most semi-government agencies.

The FOI Act allows people to apply for access to documents held by an agency. Documents include paper and electronic documents, maps, tapes, and graphs. The majority of FOI requests are from individuals asking for personal documents or documents relating to the activities of Government.

The FOI Act outlines general categories of information that are exempt from release. These include information relating to the personal affairs of third parties, information provided in confidence, information that if released might endanger the lives or physical safety of individuals, cabinet documents, information which would subject organisations to commercial disadvantage, and internal working documents the release of which would be contrary to the public interest.

Making a freedom of information request

A request must be made in writing and accompanied by the application fee of \$31.80. The fee may be waived in cases where payment would cause an applicant financial hardship. Requests should be addressed to the Executive Officer of the VSIDC.

An FOI request must be specific enough to allow an agency to identify documents considered relevant to a request. Where the terms of a request are not clear enough to undertake a search, assistance will be provided to applicants to help determine the type of documents sought.

No requests for access to VSIDC documents under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* were received by the VSIDC in 2022-23. No requests for access to VSIDC documents were received by the Manager Freedom of Information, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action in 2022-23.

Compliance with Building Act 1993

The VSIDC does not own or control any government buildings and consequently is exempt from notifying its compliance with the building and maintenance provisions of the *Building Act 1993*.

Competitive Neutrality Policy

Competitive neutrality requires government businesses to ensure where services compete, or potentially compete with the private sector, any advantage arising solely from their government ownership be removed if it is not in the public interest. Government businesses are required to cost and price these services as if they were privately owned. Competitive neutrality policy supports fair competition between public and private businesses and provides government businesses with a tool to enhance decisions on resource allocation. This policy does not override other policy objectives of government and focuses on efficiency in the provision of service.

The VSIDC continues to comply with the requirements of the Competitive Neutrality Policy.

Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012¹

The Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012 (PID Act) enables people to make a disclosure about corrupt or improper conduct by a public officer or a public body.

The VSIDC is a public body for the purposes of the PID Act.

What is a public interest disclosure?

A public interest disclosure is a complaint of corrupt or improper conduct or detrimental action by a public officer or a public body.

'Improper or corrupt conduct' involves substantial mismanagement of public resources, risk to public health or safety or the environment, or corruption.

'Detrimental action' is action taken against a person in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure.

How do I make a public interest disclosure?

You can make a public interest disclosure about the VSIDC or its board members, officers, or employees by contacting Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) (details below).

The VSIDC is not able to receive public interest disclosures.

The VSIDC has established procedures for the protection of persons from detrimental action in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure about the VSIDC, its board members, officers, or employees. You can access the VSIDC's procedures on its website at: https://vicstrawberry.com.au.

Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) Victoria

Address: Level 1, North Tower, 459 Collins Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000.

Mail: IBAC, GPO Box 24234, Melbourne Victoria 3001

Internet: www.ibac.vic.gov.au

Phone: 1300 735 135

Email: See the IBAC website above for the secure email disclosure process, which also provides

for anonymous disclosures.

Compliance with the Disability Act 2006

The VSIDC is not a 'public sector body' for the purposes of section 38 of the Disability Act 2006.

Asset Management Accountability Disclosure

The Asset Management Accountability Framework (AMAF), issued in 2016, requires the VSIDC to conduct a self-assessment of the level of asset management maturity within the organisation.

The VSIDC is unable to report on the information required regarding the level of asset management maturity in this reporting period.

Statement of Pecuniary Interests

All members of the VSIDC have completed a statement of pecuniary interests, which are held by the accountable officer – Tom Cosentino.

¹ The Protected Disclosures Act 2012 was renamed and on 1 Jan2020, became the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012

Victorian Auditor General Office External Auditors

RSD Audit of 41A Breen Street, Bendigo, Victoria are agents for the Auditor General Victoria for the 2022-23 audit of accounts.

Additional information

In compliance with the requirements of the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance, details in respect of the items listed below have been retained by the VSIDC and are available (in full) on request, subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act* 1982:

- a) details of publications produced by VSIDC about itself, and how these can be obtained;
- b) details of any major external reviews carried out on the VSIDC;
- c) details of major research and development activities undertaken by the VSIDC;
- d) details of major promotional, public relations and marketing activities undertaken by the VSIDC to develop community awareness of the entity and its services;
- e) details of changes in prices, fees, charges, rates, and levies charged; and
- f) details of all consultancies and contractors, including consultants/contractors engaged, services provided, and expenditure committed for each engagement.

The information is available on request from:

Tom Cosentino

Executive Officer

VSIDC

Phone: 0450 040 634

Email: tom@margoconsulting.com.au

Additional Information included in annual report

Details in respect of the following items have been included in the VSIDC's annual report, on the pages indicated below:

a) a statement of completion of declarations of pecuniary interests by relevant officers (on page 17).

Information that is not applicable to the VSIDC

The following information is not relevant to the VSIDC for the reasons set out below:

- a) there were no major external reviews carried out on the VSIDC during the 2022-23 financial year
- b) a declaration of shares held by senior officers (No shares have ever been issued in VSIDC)
- c) details of overseas visits undertaken (No committee members or staff took overseas work-related trips.)

Disclosure Index

An index identifying the VSIDC's compliance with statutory disclosure requirements is contained at the end of this report.

Financial Management Compliance Attestation Statement

I, Mick Molluso, on behalf of the Responsible Body, certify that the VSIDC has no Material Compliance Deficiencies with respect to the applicable Standing Directions under the *Financial Management Act* 1994 and Instructions.

Mick Molluso Chairperson

Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee

Date: 23 August 2023

Financial Statements Year Ended 30 June 2023

Declaration in the Financial Statements

The attached financial statements for the VSIDC have been prepared in accordance with Direction 5.2 of the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, applicable Financial Reporting Directions, Australian Accounting Standards including interpretations, and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

We further state that, in our opinion, the information set out in the comprehensive operating statement, balance sheet, statement of changes in equity, cash flow statement and accompanying notes, presents fairly the financial transactions during the year ended 30 June 2023 and financial position of the VSIDC at 30 June 2023.

At the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstance which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We authorise the attached financial statements for issue on this day.

Mick Molluso

Chairperson

Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee

Date: 23 August 2023

Tom Cosentino

Chief Finance Officer

Theleun

Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee

Date: 23 August 2023

Mauro De Iulio

Mauro De Tulio

Committee Member

Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee

Date: 23 August 2023

COMPREHENSIVE OPERATING STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	Notes	2023 (\$)	2022 (\$)
Revenue and income from Transactions Grower Charge Grants and Contributions Interest Other Income		156,881 134,132 7,639 6,000	187,828 95,000 784 6,000
Total Revenue and income from Transactions		304,653	289,612
Expenditure from Transactions Administration Audit Fees Committee Expenses Industry Promotion Research and Development Secretarial Services	7	(9,748) (11,000) - (53,740) (207,423) (65,000)	(12,245) (11,000) - (63,640) (168,802) (60,000)
Total Expenditure from Transactions		(346,911)	(315,687)
Net Result for the Year		(42,258)	(26,075)
Comprehensive result for the year		(42,258)	(26,075)

The above comprehensive operating statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

	Notes	2023 (\$)	2022 (\$)
Current Assets		(.)	(.,
Cash and Cash Equivalents		219,098	211,003
Receivables		92,236	141,582
Prepayments		7,965	7,383
Total Current Assets		319,297	359,968
Total Assets		319,297	359,968
Current Liabilities			
Payables		12,175	11,810
Employee Provisions		6,557	7,458
Total Current Liabilities		18,732	19,268
Non-Current Liabilities			
Employee Provisions		10,714	8,587
Total Non-Current Liabilities		10,714	8,587
Total Liabilities		29,446	27,855
Net Assets		289,851	332,114
Facility			
Equity Contributed Capital		205,274	205,274
Accumulated Surplus		84,577	126,840
Accumulated Culpius		0-,517	120,040
Total Equity		289,851	332,114
			_

The above balance sheet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

CASHFLOW STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	Notes	2023 (\$)	2022 (\$)
Cash Flows from Operating Activities		(47	(+)
Receipts ² Grower charge Contributions & Grants Interest Other Net GST refund from ATO Total receipts		206,228 147,545 7,639 6,600 9,039 377,051	199,396 104,500 783 6,600 9,101 321,452
Payments Payments to suppliers and service providers Total payments		(368,956) (368,956)	(335,253) (335,253)
Net Cash (paid)/received from Operating Activities	4	8,095	(13,801)
Net Movement in Cash and cash equivalents Held Cash and cash equivalents at Beginning of Year		8,095 211,003	(13,801) 224,804
Cash and cash equivalents at End of Year		219,098	211,003

The above cash flow statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

² Amounts presented are inclusive of applicable GST.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	Notes	2023 (\$)	2022 (\$)
Equity		,	
Balance at beginning of the financial year		332,114	358,190
Net result for the year		(42,258)	(26,075)
Balance at end of the financial year		289,856	332,114
Represented by: Contributed Capital			
Balance at beginning of the financial year		205,274	205,274
Balance at end of the financial year Accumulated Surplus		205,274	205,274
Balance at beginning of the financial year		126,840	152,918
Net result for the year		(42,258)	(26,075)

The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Statement of compliance

The financial statements are a general-purpose financial statements which has been prepared on an accrual basis in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994* and applicable Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations (AASs).

The financial statements also comply with relevant Financial Reporting Directions (FRD) issued by the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF), and relevant Standing Directions (SD) authorised by the Minister for Finance.

In complying AASs, the entity has, where relevant, applied those paragraphs applicable to not-for-profit entities.

Going Concern

The Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee ("VSIDC") was established by an Order of the Victorian Government under the *Agricultural Industry Development Act 1990*, whereby the "Order" will be extended on a four-year term basis, if every four years the Victorian Strawberry Growers Association (VSGA) seeks the Minister's approval for a ballot of strawberry growers.

A ballot was undertaken in February 2022 to determine whether growers wanted the Committee to continue and sought Ministerial approval to continue the Order. The result was an endorsement of the VSIDC, and the former Minister signed the documentation for the continuation of the Order in June 2022 to conclude on 30 June 2026. Therefore, management consider the VSIDC to be a going concern.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on a historical cost basis. Cost is based on the fair values of the consideration given in exchange for assets.

The accrual basis of accounting has been used with revenues and expenses being recognised as they are earned or incurred and are brought to account in the period to which they relate.

In the application of AASs, management is required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstance, the results of which form the basis of making the judgments. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in the application of AASs that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates relate to assumptions for employee benefit provisions based on likely tenure of existing staff, patterns of leave claims, future salary movements and future discount rates (refer to Note 1(e)).

Accounting policies are selected and applied in a manner which ensures that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported.

The accounting policies set out below have been applied in preparing the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2023 and the comparative information presented for the year ended 30 June 2022.

(a) Revenue

Grower charge income is recognised when the right to receive it has been established.

Grant income represents grants received from Horticulture Innovation Australia Ltd, Berries

Australia Limited.

Grant and grower charge income agreements do not include sufficiently specific performance obligations, and therefore is recognised upon receipt in line with AASB 1058 Income for not-for-profit entities.

Interest income is recognised as it accrues, using the effective interest method.

(b) Employee Benefits

Employee benefits are disclosed in the line-item Research & Development. These include:

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Wages & Salaries Superannuation	105,018 10,860	103,155 10,315
Other Employee Costs	115.878	113.470

Employee expenses include all costs related to employment including wages and salaries, leave entitlements and WorkCover premiums.

Liabilities for wages and salaries (including non-monetary benefits annual leave and on-costs), are all recognised in the employee provisions as 'current liabilities', because the Committee does not have an unconditional right to defer settlements of these liabilities.

As at reporting date, employees annual leave provision is as disclosed in the balance sheet. There are no long service leave liabilities at reporting date.

(c) Receivables

The VSIDC holds receivables with the objective to collect the contractual cash flows and are therefore subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Based on the nature of these receivables, the nominal cash value is deemed to approximate the amortised cost.

(d) Prepayments

Prepayments include payments in advance of receipt of goods or services or that part of expenditure made in one accounting period covering a term extending beyond that period.

(e) Payables

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Committee prior to the end of the financial year and which are unpaid. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

(f) Goods and services tax

Revenues, expenses, and assets are recognised net of GST except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable, in which case it is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of an asset or part of an item of expense. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is included as part of receivables or payables in the balance sheet. GST has been included in the cash flow statement.

(g) Cash and Cash Equivalents

For purposes of the cash flow statement, cash includes cash on hand is subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

(h) Taxation

The activities of the Committee are exempt from Income Tax under Section 50-25 of the Income *Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

(i) Comparatives

Where necessary the figures for the previous year have been reclassified to facilitate comparison.

(j) Rounding of amounts

Amounts in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest dollar.

(k) Leases

The committee did not have, or enter into, any leases that would require recognition under AASB 16 in the 2023 financial year.

2. Commitments

At 30 June 2023, the VSIDC did not have any commitments (commitments at 30 June 2022 were nil).

3. Contingent Assets and Liabilities

At 30 June 2023, the Committee members were unaware of any liabilities of a contingent nature (Contingent liabilities at 30 June 2022 were nil).

4. Reconciliation of result for the year to net cash inflow from operating activities

	2023 (\$)	2022 (\$)
Comprehensive result for the year	(42,260)	(23,251)
Movement in assets and liabilities Increase/(decrease) in Payables Increase/(decrease) in Provisions (Increase)/decrease in Receivables (Increase)/decrease in Prepayment	365 1,226 49,346 (581)	(2,282) - 11,496 236
Net Cash (Outflow)/Inflow in Operating Activities	8,095	(13,801)

5. Key Management Personnel and Related Party Transactions

5.1 Responsible Persons

In accordance with the Ministerial Directions issued by the Minister for Finance under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, the following disclosures are made regarding responsible persons for the reporting period.

Responsible Minister

The responsible minister during the 2022-23 reporting period was The Hon Gayle Tierney MP.

<u>Names</u>

The names of persons who were responsible persons of the Committee at any time during the financial year are as follows:

Name	Position 1	Title

Mr Dominic Molluso Chairperson/Accountable Officer

Mr Mauro De'Iulio Treasurer

Mr Michael Gangi Committee Member
Mr Scott Carter Committee Member
Ms Bronwyn Koll Committee Member

Dr Amanda Ellery Non-Voting Government Observer

5.2 Remuneration of Responsible Persons

Remuneration received or receivable by the Accountable Officers in connection with the management of the VSIDC during the reporting period were in the following ranges:

Remuneration band:	2023	2022
\$0 - \$9,999	_	_
\$10,000 - \$19,999	_	_
\$40,000-\$49,999	-	-
\$60,000-\$69,999	1	1

5.3 Remuneration of Executives

The number of executive officers, other than Ministers and accountable officers, and their total remuneration during the reporting period are shown in the table below. Total annualised employee equivalents (AAE) provide a measure of full-time equivalent executive officers over the reporting period.

Remuneration		2022
Short-term benefits	65,000	60,000
Total remuneration		60,000
Total number of responsible persons	8	8
Total number of responsible persons (AAE)	1	1

The remuneration detailed above excludes the salaries and benefits the portfolio minister receives. The Ministers' remuneration and allowances is set by the *Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968* and is reported within the State's Annual Financial Report.

5.4 Related Parties

The Committee is a wholly owned and controlled entity of the State of Victoria.

Related parties of the Committee include:

- All key management personnel and their close family members and personal business interests (controlled entities, joint ventures, and entities they have a significant influence over);
- All cabinet members and their close family members;
- All departments and public-sector entities that are controlled and consolidated in the whole of state consolidated financial statements.

All related party transactions have been entered into on an arm's length basis.

Key Management Personnel

Key management personnel of the Committee include all Responsible persons as listed in Note 5.1.

Compensation of KMPs		
	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Short term employee benefits	65,000	60,000
•		
Total	65,000	60,000

<u>Transactions with government related entities</u>

The Committee has not received any funding from any State government related entity.

Transactions with key management personnel and other related parties

The following transactions with key management personnel and other related parties are noted:

John Hasan Family Trust, (John Hasan being a former Chairperson of the VSIDC) received \$22,073 (2022: \$22,073), as rent paid by the VSIDC for property rented at 6A Union Road, Wandin and classed as the Victorian Strawberry Centre. This office complex consists of offices, boardroom, kitchen, and other facilities for the use of the Victorian strawberry industry and its staff.

6. **Events Subsequent to Balance Date**

There are no subsequent events of which the Committee is aware that would affect the information provided within the financial report.

7. **Audit Fees**

	2023 \$	2022 \$
VAGO for Audit of Financial Statements:	11,000	11,000

8. **Financial Instruments**

Financial instruments arise out of contractual agreements that give rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity.

(a) Categories of financial assets

Financial assets at amortised cost arise when both of the following criteria are met, and the assets are not designated as fair value through net result:

- the assets are held by the VSIDC to collect the contractual cash flows, and
- the assets' contractual terms give rise to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interests.

These assets are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less any impairment.

The VSIDC recognises the following assets in this category:

- cash and deposits; and
- receivables (excluding statutory receivables).

(b) Categorisation of financial instruments

	Category	Carrying amount 2023 (\$)	Carrying amount 2022 (\$)
Financial assets			_
Cash and cash equivalents	Cash and deposits	219,098	211,003
Receivables (non-Statutory)	Financial assets measured at amortised	92,235	141,582
	cost		
Financial liabilities			
Payables (non-Statutory)	Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	11,000	11,000

(c) Risk Assessment

The VSIDC's main financial risks include market risk and interest rate risk. The VSIDC manages these financial risks in accordance with its financial risk management policy.

The VSIDC uses different methods to measure and manage the different risks to which it is exposed. Primary responsibility for the identification and management of financial risks rests with the Committee.

Market risk

The Committee's exposure to market risk is primarily through interest rate risk with currently no exposure to other price risk or foreign currency risk.

Interest rate risk

Exposure to interest rate risk might arise primarily through the VSIDC's cash & deposits (receivables and payables are non-interest bearing). Minimisation of risk is achieved by mainly undertaking fixed rate or non-interest-bearing financial instruments.

The Committee's exposure to interest rate risk is set out in the tables below.

	Weighted average	Interest Rate Exposure		osure
2023	Effective interest rate %	Carrying amount	Variable interest rate	Non- interest bearing
Financial Assets Cash & Cash Equivalents	3.48	219,098	219,098	-
Financial Assets Cash & Cash Equivalents	0.01	211,003	211,003	-

Sensitivity disclosure analysis

Taking into account past performance, future expectations, economic forecasts, and management's knowledge and experience of the financial markets, the VSIDC has assessed that movements in interest rates over the next 12 months will have insignificant impacts on net operating result and equity.

Fair value

The VSIDC currently holds a range of financial instruments that are recorded in the financial statements where the carrying amounts approximate to fair value due to their short-term nature or with the expectation that they will be paid in full by the end of the 2022-23 reporting period.

Independent Auditor's Report



To the Members of Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee

Opinion

I have audited the financial report of Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee (the committee) which comprises the:

- Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2023
- Comprehensive Operating Statement for the year then ended
- Statement of Changes in Equity for the year then ended
- Cash Flow Statement for the year then ended
- Notes to the financial report, including significant accounting policies
- Director's declaration.

In my opinion the financial report presents fairly, in all material aspects, the financial position of the committee as at 30 June 2023 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements Part 7 of the *Financial Management Act 1994* and applicable Australian Accounting Standards.

Basis for Opinion

I have conducted my audit in accordance with the *Audit Act 1994* which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of my report.

My independence is established by the *Constitution Act 1975*. My staff and I are independent of the Committee in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Other Information

The Members of the committee are responsible for the Other Information, which comprises the information in the Report of Operations for the year ended 30 June 2023, but does not include the financial report and my auditor's report thereon.

My opinion on the financial report does not cover the Other Information and accordingly, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion on the Other Information. However, in connection with my audit of the financial report, my responsibility is to read the Other Information and in doing so, consider whether it is materially inconsistent with the financial report or the knowledge I obtained during the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude there is a material misstatement of the Other Information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard.

Committee Member's responsibilities for the financial report

The Members of the Committee are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the *Financial Management Act 1994*, and for such internal control as the Trust Members determines is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Members of the Committee are responsible for assessing the committee's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is inappropriate to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report

As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit
 procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of
 expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the committee's internal control.
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee.
- conclude on the appropriateness of the committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the committee's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the committee to cease to continue as a going concern.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the committee regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

BENDIGO 29 August 2023 Mahesh Silva

as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

DISCLOSURE INDEX

The annual report of the Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee is prepared in accordance with all relevant Victorian legislations and pronouncements. This index has been prepared to facilitate identification of the Department's compliance with statutory disclosure requirements.

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Financial Management Act 1994			

Glossary

EO	Executive Officer
FMA	Financial Management Act 1994
FRD	Financial Reporting Directions
HIAL	Horticulture Innovation Australia Ltd
HAL	Horticulture Australia Ltd
IDO	Industry Development Officer
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
OH&S	Occupational Health and Safety
Order	Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Order
QLD	Queensland
R&D	Research and Development
SAI	Strawberries Australia Inc.
VIC	Victoria
VIPP	Victorian Industry Participation Policy
VSGA	Victorian Strawberry Growers Association
VSIDC	Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee
VSICA	Victorian Strawberry Industry Certification Authority
