

2021 Annual General Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: Thursday, 14 October 2021 at 11am (AEDT)
Location: Zoom ID - [87943510494](#)
Meeting Chair: Charlie Prell
Scribe: Tryphena Watson

Quorum Required: 11 members

FCA Members: Charlie Prell, Lucinda Corrigan, Joanne Oddie, Rebecca Gorman, Anthony Houston, Peter Holding, Angus Emmott, Anika Molesworth, Michael McDonald, Rob McCreath, Jim McDonald, Brett Hall, Anna Rose, Glenn Morris, Mark Wootton, Angus Whyte, Robert Quirk, Neil Westcott, and Dale Park.

FCA Staff: Fiona Davis (CEO), Georgia Webster (General Manager), James Atkinson (Fundraising Manager), Emily Jones (Community Organising Manager), and Tryphena Watson (Office Manager).

Guest Speaker: Gabrielle Chan

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| 1. Welcome and Chair remarks | Chair |
| 2. Guest speaker | Gabrielle Chan |

Gabrielle Chan has been a journalist for more than 30 years. She is currently the Rural & Regional editor at Guardian Australia, where she's also been a political journalist and live blogger since 2013. Prior to that, she worked at The Australian, ABC radio, The Daily Telegraph, in local newspapers and politics.

Gabrielle shared her insights into the past, present, and future of farming in Australia.

Chair officially opened the AGM proceedings at 12:03pm

3. Apologies

Chair

Chair noted an apology was received from Kirrily Blomfield.

Confirmed

4. General

Chair

a. Recommendation: That the Membership of Farmers for Climate Action accept the minutes of the previous AGM as a true reflection of its proceedings. **Confirmed. Motion Carried.**

b. No business arising

5. Chairperson report

Chair

Chair, Charlie Prell summarised his report (see appendix one) and acknowledged Lucinda Corrigan for her contribution and commitment during her tenure as Chair of FCA through to September 2020. **Report endorsed**

The Chair also thanked the Board Directors for their contribution.

6. CEO report

CEO

Fiona Davis introduced herself, summarised her contributions and her work history with Farmers for Climate Action, noting that the past year has seen a significant shift in the national narrative in relation to climate action, from raising awareness to highlighting the opportunities a green recovery presents to regional Australians.

The CEO tabled her report (see appendix two) and thanked the team, board, members, and donors for being part of a trusted voice on climate change. **Report endorsed**

7. Financial Report

FRAR Committee

Chair of the FRAR, Brett Hall tabled his report (see appendix three) and congratulated the FRAR committee, CEO and staff for their management of the budget.

Recommendation: That the Membership of Farmers for Climate Action accept the provided audited financial report and express confidence that FCA can meet all obligations as they fall due. **Motion passed**

Recommendation: That the Membership of Farmers for Climate Action appoint Jeff Ryan of Thomas Davis & Co as auditor for the 2021/2022 period. **Motion passed**

The Chair formally thanked Brett Hall for his expertise, time and commitment to FCA as Chair of the FRAR committee.

8. Questions to the Directors

Chair

No questions to the Directors.

The Chair thanked the members for their feedback and input into the strategic plan for the next 3 years. The strategic plan is expected to be available late October / early November 2021.

9. Election of Office-bearers

Chair

- a. The Chair announced that Dale Park has resigned from the Board of Directors.
- b. Chair endorsed the re-election of Michael McDonald and Anna Rose. **Motion passed**
- c. Confirmation of Michael McDonald is elected as an FCA Governor. **Unanimous support.**
- d. Election results announced (see appendix five)

The Chair encouraged members to consider future nominations for the Board Directors. He thanked Dale for his contribution to FCA during his time as a Director.

Anthony Houston congratulated the CEO for the great work achieved in the past 6 months and acknowledged how the pandemic has been a strength for FCA to open up opportunities for connection with farmers in remote areas around Australia.

10. Meeting formally closed at 12:30pm

Chair

Appendix One: Chair Report

Welcome to my first report as Chair of the Board of Farmers for Climate Action. I'm proud to have been involved with FCA since our first meeting in 2015. We have come a long way since then!

Firstly, I'd like to pay tribute to our retiring Chair, Lucinda Corrigan, who completed her term in September 2020. Lucinda's extraordinary networking skills and ability to build relationships in agriculture and politics were a huge boost to FCA, and were critical to us gaining the profile and credibility that we have. I thank her deeply for her commitment and guidance during her time as Chair.

2020 began with drought and bushfires, followed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Living in a pandemic has motivated many Australians to consider the future, and we're excited to see climate discussions now being held openly and frankly without the fear of being branded as radicals. While Covid restrictions have prevented travel, the spread of FCA staff and Board Directors across the country meant we were already more skilled than most at communicating online. While our operations have been affected, we have been able to adapt to this new world as well as any.

For three months in 2019-20 our farm was blanketed in thick smoke from the devastating bushfires in the southern states. Then the drought suddenly broke and the fires were extinguished in February 2020 with 100mm of rain overnight. That was the day that I travelled to Parliament House to support the launch of the Climate Change Bill by Independent MPs Zali Steggall and Helen Haines. The Bill has come full circle and unfortunately but not surprisingly, it was rejected by the House Environment & Energy Committee. There is a lot of heavy lifting to be done in Australia on climate change if we are to meet the target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050, or preferably earlier. The longer we leave action to address climate change, the more intractable the problem will become and the harder it will be to implement the solutions.

In June 2021 Farmers for Climate Action took the opportunity to immediately call on new Nationals leader and deputy Prime Minister, Barnaby Joyce, to support a target of net zero emissions by 2050. We've been intimately engaged in discussions within the National Farmers Federation that have led them to accept the target, and we've frequently been asked for advice by commodity organisations and state farmer groups to put together workable climate policies. We are seeing much more widespread acceptance of the science of climate change within the farming community.

In tandem with our political work, we strongly endorsed MP Helen Haines' Local Power Plan. This plan is focused on building a 'sunbelt' of community-owned, renewable power stations across regional Australia. In May 2021 it was very encouraging to see more than 300 people – half of them farmers – at the National Renewables in Agriculture Conference & Expo in Dubbo,

NSW. In the same month, FCA was strongly represented in Tasmania with a stall at the state's largest field days at AgFest. In conjunction with the TFGA, we organised and ran the Tasmanian Climate-Smart Forum in September which was an outstanding success, with over 200 people attending.

In early September we released a report we commissioned EY to prepare that outlines a pathway for agriculture to achieve net zero emissions by 2040. This report was very well received by the farming community, politicians, the public and the media. It highlights the important role that agriculture MUST play if Australia is to comply with our international agreements and our moral obligations to our children. It shows how farmers can prosper in a sustainable future. For the first time, someone (FCA) has highlighted the opportunities and benefits for agriculture if we address climate change, instead of just talking about the costs of action.

I want to extend the warmest welcome to our new CEO Fiona Davis, who many of you will know as our former deputy director. Fiona replaces Wendy Cohen, who led us admirably through a difficult year last year, managing an increase in staff and member numbers, along with an increasing budget. Fiona was the outstanding candidate from a field of high quality candidates and has brought a new style of leadership to the role. She has instilled a new level of confidence and communication within the staff to ensure they are happy and productive.

Under this new leadership team, the FCA board and staff are working hard together to amplify the voices of farmers who want to take aggressive action to address climate change. We're also strongly focused on delivering fellowships to ensure Australia's farmers are as 'climate smart' as possible as they confront the challenging weather systems that climate change is already bringing to us.

During September the Board and senior staff have been formulating our new strategic plan. This has been particularly challenging as we have had to have these discussions and make decisions about our future over the Internet. However, I'm confident that we will have a comprehensive document to guide our work for the next 18 months and beyond. Everything FCA does is informed by science and evidence, and is guided by our strategic plan.

I want to thank all of you who contribute to the extraordinary success of this organisation, whether you are a voluntary Board member, a paid staff member, a volunteer, a supporter, or a donor. We have made great progress this year and are finally seeing the tide turning in Australia.

Talking about climate action has gone on for far too long. It's time to end the 'climate wars' in Australia. It's time to act. Farmers can, and must, be at the front line of climate action. Farmers for Climate Action will continue to show the way forward.

Charlie Prell
Chair of the Board, Farmers for Climate Action

Appendix Two: CEO Report

It was no coincidence that Farmers for Climate Action's supporter base grew considerably over the last year, at the same time as our movement grappled with recovery from fires, floods and an ongoing pandemic that ground the global economy to a halt.

With Black Summer still looming large in the public psyche, the prospect of a post-covid green recovery appealed to rural and urban Australians alike. Today, we have more than 6000 supporters.

In the months since the launch of the Regional Horizons report, many of the initiatives put forward are well on their way to becoming a reality. The National Climate Change and Agriculture Work Plan is progressing with the Victorian Government at the helm, and Drought Resilience Hubs which closely resemble the hubs we put forward are being rolled out.

Our staff also grew in 2021 as we looked to increase our presence on the ground across the country. While the pandemic put physical events on hold for the most part, I was incredibly proud to see the FCA team 'pivot' online and maintain momentum under trying circumstances.

I would like to thank the Board, and our new Chair Charlie Prell, for their enthusiasm and critical strategic guidance. We are fortunate to have such high calibre advocates guiding our work.

With the UN climate talks due this coming November and a federal election, FCA's work amplifying farmer voices has never been more important, but neither have we been so well placed.

As we near the end of our first strategic plan, which paved the way for great outcomes throughout 2018-2021, I'm looking forward to working with the Board to set our strategy and plans for 2022-24 with the input of our farmers, supporters and staff.

The window to act on climate change is closing, but the opportunity that good climate policy presents is growing. Let's make the coming year the one that we cut through the divisiveness of climate politics in Australia, and begin to fundamentally shift our climate change trajectory.

Fiona Davis
CEO, Farmers for Climate Action

Appendix Three: Finance Report

The Finance, Risk, Audit & Remuneration Sub-committee, (FRAR) continued to monitor the organisation's financial management and review the risks for the organisation and staff. The committee generally meets monthly prior to board meetings and the minutes circulated to the board. These minutes include current financial reports, actions and any recommendations for the board to consider.

The membership of the FRAR Committee this year included: Mr Brett Hall (Chair), Mr Charlie Prell and Ms Anna Rose. The finances are also overseen by our CEO, financial advisor, bookkeeper and auditor - we thank them and our FRAR Committee for their hard work over the past 12 months.

The organisation has continued its record of sound financial management by again ending the year in the black. During a very challenging time across the world FCA has had to be innovative to deliver our programs and message across the Nation. It should be noted that due to Covid restrictions FCA will be carrying over funds (\$438,000) for programs which were unable to be completed in full but will be delivered early in the 21/22 financial year. In line with the Board's strategy, we identified that it was important to increase our working capital to ensure a constant cash flow, as many of our donors contribute closer to the end of the financial year. Our reserves were also increased to reflect our salary obligations for employing additional staff to work across regional Australia.

Brett Hall
Chair of FRAR Committee, Farmers for Climate Action

Audited Financial Report

The 2021 AGM documents circulated to members included the audited 'Farmers for Climate Action Limited', Financial report for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

Highlights of the report include:

1. Provision of an Unconditional Audit
2. Revenue: \$1,642,593
3. Expenditure: \$1,040,834
4. Net operating profit/(loss) after income tax: \$601,759
5. Net assets: \$1,538,434

Board Recommendation: That the Membership of Farmers for Climate Action accept the provided audited financial report and express confidence that FCA can meet all obligations as they fall due.

Appointment of Auditor

The FRAR Committee & Board were very pleased with the quality of the audit conducted by Mr Jeff Ryan of Thomas Davis & Co for Farmers for Climate Action for the 2020/2021 financial year and recommend their engagement for another year.

Board Recommendation: That the Membership of Farmers for Climate Action appoint Jeff Ryan of Thomas Davis & Co as auditor for the 2021/2022 period.

Appendix Four: Director nominations

Board Nominations for Farmers for Climate Action Ltd 2021

Nominations for the re-election of Board Directors, Michael McDonald & Anna Rose were signed and received.

Dale Park resigned as a Board Director on 14 October 2021.

Board of Directors as of 14 October 2021:

Chair:	Charlie Prell	Crookwell, NSW	elected to 15 Oct 2023
Deputy Chair:	Anika Molesworth	Griffith NSW	elected to 15 Oct 2023
FRAR Chair:	Brett Hall	Hobart, Tas	elected to 15 Oct 2023
Governance Chair:	Michael McDonald	Gerroa, NSW	elected to 14 Oct 2024
Board Director:	Anna Rose	Sydney NSW	elected to 14 Oct 2024
Board Director:	Angus Emmott	Longreach, Qld	elected to 15 Oct 2022

Under clause 90 of the Farmers for Climate Action Constitution, the number of Directors comprising the Board will be at least 3 and no more than 10.

With two nominations received for these positions, all candidates listed above will be declared elected at the Annual General Meeting as per Clause 93.3.