

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

5<sup>th</sup> November 2012

### **Taste Riverina Food Festival success excites region**

The Taste Riverina Food Festival officially came to an end last week, concluding the month-long Riverina food and fibre celebration.

As the conduit between government and local communities in the region, Regional Development Australia-Riverina (RDA-Riverina) welcomed the opportunity to work collaboratively with all the communities involved in this inaugural festival, and is absolutely thrilled with the event's success.

Tom Watson, Chairman of RDA-Riverina said the event was a brilliant showcase of the Riverina's innovative food and wine industry, offering visitors and locals a chance to experience the abundance of agricultural products produced in the region.

"RDA-Riverina is extremely supportive of events such as these which provide the opportunity to showcase our region and bring together producers, local government, businesses and the wider community to share a common interest – food and fibre," Mr Watson said.

"Agriculture is by far the largest employer in the Riverina region and because of this it is recognised as one of Australia's leading food bowls – in fact, the Riverina provides over one-quarter of all the fruit and vegetables produced in NSW.

"From the 'paddock to the plate' there is much to celebrate in our region and the Taste Riverina Food Festival provided the opportunity to reinvigorate local perceptions, allowing the Riverina to increase awareness of the exciting nature of our leading industry. It also gave us a chance to educate people regarding the key importance of the expanding food and fibre industry, to not only our region, but also the nation as a whole."

RDA-Riverina CEO, Lani Houston said that all the communities of the Riverina showed great support for the event's activities and could be proud of the Taste Riverina committee's efforts in running a first-rate Festival in the region.

"From the grand opening event at Juneë Licorice Factory in early October throughout the month-long calendar of events, which included 100 mile meals, celebrity chefs, wine events, food classes and treks, agriculture tours and community garden programs at schools of the region - community participation was incredible, with big numbers turning up to most events and many selling out completely," said Ms Houston.

"The diversity of activities produced an inclusive event with something for all ages and tastes – showcases at community gardens like Hay Public School formed an important part of that, and were a great way to reinforce important messages about healthy eating.

"We were also particularly pleased to see some of the smaller communities such as Coleambally and Hay contributing and taking part in festival events."

Ms Houston concluded by saying, "Taste Riverina was an outstanding success. The overall feeling towards the event is very positive and the committee is already busy planning for next year.

"With much of the success due to the partnerships formed between various community organisations a solid foundation has been laid for the event's future. RDA-Riverina is proud to be associated with the event and looks forward to contributing to the festival in the coming years."

The following 2012 Taste Riverina Food Festival events sold out or recorded strong numbers:

- Grand Opening, Junee – 150 attendees
- The Master and the Apprentice Traditional Italian Breakfast, Griffith – 60
- Griffith 100-mile Assiginis, Griffith – 150
- Taste Coly 50 mile meal – sold out
- 100-mile Italian Long Lunch at TAFE NSW Riverina Institute, Wagga Wagga – sold out
- A Local Taste of Italy Long lunch, Cootamundra – 100
- Wine discovery trail, Griffith – over 300
- All Cooking schools – sold out

- ENDS -

**Photo attached:**

Official smashing of leaning tower chocolate smash cake by Michael McCormack MP and RDA-Riverina Chair Tom Watson at TASTE Riverina Food Festival Grand Opening, Junee Licorice Factory (5 October 2012)

**All media enquiries:**

Lani Houston, CEO RDA-Riverina  
Ph: 02 6964 5540  
Email: [lhoust@rdariverina.org.au](mailto:lhoust@rdariverina.org.au)