



# The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

## Minister for Primary Industries

## Minister for Small Business

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Thursday 12 September 2013

#### **NEW SOUTHERN NSW FOOD TRAIL LAUNCHED**

Minister for Primary Industries and Small Business, Katrina Hodgkinson, today launched a new food trail which is leading the way in attracting tourists to southern NSW.

Speaking at Fine Food Australia 2013 in Sydney, Ms Hodgkinson praised the organisers of the newly formed Southern NSW Harvest Association for enticing people to visit one of the State's finest agricultural regions.

"The Southern NSW Harvest is showing the way engaging consumers with the quality and variety of NSW food, wine and fibre," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"This farm-gate trail starts a stone's throw from Sydney and provides a unique opportunity for consumers to meet the producers of food and wine, to see animals and the crops, and to taste the fresh produce.

"The Southern NSW Harvest region is a particularly special area of prime agricultural lands, beginning at the Southern Highlands and extending south through Gundagai and west to Cootamundra."

Ms Hodgkinson said the Southern NSW Harvest footprint spans 14 local government areas and that the initiative incorporates a digital trading platform designed to bring together stakeholders from across the regional food value chain to collaborate and trade.

"This technology provides a globally accessible, user-friendly, digital marketplace where businesses can communicate and trade around the clock," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"Farmers and value-adders can list and sell their produce directly to other food industry businesses such as retailers, food service providers and processors.

"Already more than 80 primary producers and food-related enterprises have joined the Southern NSW Harvest to showcase their business and region."

Minister for Tourism and Major Events, George Souris, said the creation of the program was assisted with a grant from the Destination NSW Regional Tourism Product Development Funding Program in 2011.

"Food and Wine is a priority market segment as identified in the Visitor Economy Taskforce Report and the NSW Government is keen to support it," Mr Souris said.

"The report identified food and wine as one of the top three reasons why people visit NSW from other states.

“The Regional Tourism Product Development Program was an election commitment and the NSW Government has provided \$50,000 to assist Southern NSW Harvest establish these important touring routes.”

Southern Harvest NSW project officer, Richard Everson, said the association addresses a significant regional need.

“The ‘short supply chain’ model of the regional food system bypasses traditional centralised markets, saving up to 20 per cent in transport costs, optimising freshness and dramatically reducing food miles,” Mr Everson said.

“It truly is a win-win situation for consumers and producers alike.”

For more information about Southern NSW Harvest, visit [www.southernharvest.net.au](http://www.southernharvest.net.au)