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Hunter and Central Coast food and wine showcase

22 Jun 2009

The innovative excellence of the Hunter and Central Coast food and wine industries was championed at NSW Parliament when a regional food and wine showcase was hosted by the State Government.

About 30 of the regions' best food and wine producers were promoted to Sydney food and wine buyers at the showcase on 22 June.

Food personality Lyndey Milan presented a showcase of gourmet foods and award-winning wines from about 30 passionate producers.

Hatted chef Andrew Clarke from Pokolbin's Rock Restaurant; Ian Hemphill of Herbie's Spices; and Iain Riggs, Chair of Judges of the Hunter Valley Wine Show, spoke on how Australia's oldest wine region is reinventing itself through culinary excellence.

For the rest of the week, Hunter and Central Coast produce was featured in a specially-designed menu at Parliament's Strangers Dining Room.

Minister for Primary Industries and State Development Ian Macdonald said the week aimed to generate more business for the world class food and wine producers of the Hunter and Central Coast, to help generate jobs, economic benefits and regional tourism.

"(We targeted) key players and influencers in the Sydney food and beverage trade including providers, restaurateurs, sommeliers, hotel food and beverage managers, caterers, speciality food and wine retailers, export consolidators and media representatives," Mr Macdonald said.

In a further initiative, Hunter food and wine producers showcased their produce at the Rocks Farmers Market on Fridays and Saturdays over the month, followed by other regions on a regular basis, with the assistance of the NSW Government.

Minister for the Hunter Jodi McKay said the Hunter and Central Coast are home to innovative food and beverage companies and have attracted significant industry investment in recent years.

"The Hunter and Central Coast are home to successful firms including Master Foods, Sanitarium and Sara Lee and, in recent times, we've seen investments like Kellogg Australia establishing a major snack food plant in Wyong and Pacific Beverages building its new \$100 million Bluetongue Brewery at Warnervale," Ms McKay said.

Ms McKay said it was fitting the showcase is being held in Hunter Food and Wine Month, a celebration of the very best food and wine the region has to offer.

The Hunter is Australia's oldest wine region, producing 31 million litres of wine annually with a value of more than \$230 million.

The Hunter saw almost 6.3 million visitors last year spending more than seven million nights and injecting almost \$1.3 billion into the region's economy.

The Central Coast saw more than 4.2 million visitors last year spending more than 3.5 million nights and injecting \$765 million into the region's economy.

"The Hunter and Central Coast food and wine industries have an obvious tourism and cultural appeal as well as playing an integral role each regions' economy," Ms McKay said.

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