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Granite Belt Food Forum

From Paddock to Pantry and Plate

With food production in this part of Queensland expected to experience an average annual growth rate of approximately eight per cent per annum, Queensland week is the time set for the inaugural Granite Belt Food Forum.

In a bid to involve everyone from paddock to plate, anyone on the Granite Belt who is involved in the food chain is invited to participate. That means growers through to food service and food retail.

The food forum is the latest initiative of Granite Belt Wine & Tourism Inc (GBWT) as part of its strategy to develop a sustainable tourism economy in the Queensland wine capital.

The full day event at QCWT on **Wednesday 4 June** will form the foundation of a comprehensive culinary tourism industry. Over time, such development will complement the well established horticultural and wine tourism industries on the Granite Belt.



The forum will be led by Peter Howard (*pictured*) one of Australia's leading food and wine commentators and consultants. He will be joined by Mrs Kim Currie who has a solid track record of developing food tourism in Orange, NSW.

Trends show that affluent consumers today want more from their food than just a commodity, they want taste and they are prepared to pay for it. Mr Howard said amongst the many benefits of developing food tourism on the Granite Belt is increased career opportunities for the region's young people.

When: Wednesday 4 June 9am – 5pm

Where: Queensland College of Wine Tourism

RSVP: Bookings essential before 1 June. For more contact 4681 0411 or email, marketing@granitebeltwinecountry.com.au

Cost: Free.

The purpose of the Granite Belt Food Forum is:

- Gather together all those involved in the food chain. This includes growers, processors, food service industry, food retailers and anyone with a stake in the development of wine, food or tourism in the region.
- Identify potential products, projects and activities to create a credible food tourism experience on the Granite Belt.
- Identify grass roots activists and benefactors or sponsors to make it happen.
- Agree priorities and timeframes.

Mr Howard added, "Every major wine tourism region around the world has made the move into food tourism as a stepping stone to success. Given the Granite Belt's history as a quality food producing region, the move into food tourism is a natural development. I'd encourage everyone to take this opportunity to have their say at the forum."

GBWT board member John Neville said, "This marks another building block in the development of tourism on the Granite Belt and we are fortunate to have access to such experience as Peter Howard and Kim Currie to guide our planning."

"As a sign of our commitment to the development of food tourism, the GBWT is not charging for participation. We genuinely want to involve everyone in the food sector in the region, if they are interested in working as a team," Mr Neville added.
To learn more about Queensland's premier wine region visit www.granitebeltwinecountry.com.au or phone 1800 SO COOL and expect to be surprised!

ENDS

1. **Wine** The history of the Queensland wine industry dates back to the 1860s - and like all good wines it has developed with age. Of Queensland's current 1100 hectares planted to wine grapes, approximately half of these are on the Granite Belt. It is also the largest of the ten wine regions in the state and one of only two with official GI status. The Granite Belt is home to approximately 50 wine cellar doors, the state's most awarded winemakers, plus the Queensland College of Wine Tourism - the first of its type in the world.
2. **Food** The Granite Belt is the only area in Queensland to produce apples: creating a gross value of approximately \$35m per annum (DPI&F 2006). Agriculture is the largest employer in the area, which boasts a vibrant and diverse horticultural sector.
3. **Forecasts Food production figures** - source Darling Downs & South West Queensland Centre of Enterprise and AEC Group 2007.

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