

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## TIMELY TOURISM

MLC Ruth Forrest flagged the possibility of local tourism operators developing a 'gourmet food trail' encompassing local seafood, dairy, honey, beef, organic produce, berry farms to name but a few of the gourmet delights this area is famous for.

"An opportunity does exist to showcase the regions amazing local produce and with the decision to sell Spirit of Tasmania III our main focus must now be to develop and expand existing tourism ventures on the North West and West Coast" said Ms Forrest.

Ms Forrest said that many North West and West Coast tourism operators would be eligible to apply for Federal Government Assistance, under the Tourism Grants Program Round 3. This program provides funding for development and implementation of tourism projects in regional and rural Australia, that contribute to long term economic growth, increase visitation and visitor dispersal, with grants ranging from \$50,000 to \$500,000 across two categories.

"The grants provide local tourism operators and regional tourism associations, including local government and not for profit organisations with the opportunity to develop, expand and promote the attractions on offer in their region" Ms Forrest said. "I am concerned that with the recent demise of Spirit III it appears that many tourism operators within the North West region may not even be aware of the availability of this Federal funding".

Ms Forrest stated that this funding was specifically aimed at regional and rural tourism operations and strongly encouraged interested persons to contact the AusIndustry's Hotline on 13 28 46 or visit the website on [www.ausindustry.gov.au](http://www.ausindustry.gov.au) for details.

Applications for Round 3 funding opened on Friday, 28 April 2006 and close at 5pm AEST on Wednesday, 28 June 2006. "It is unfortunate that this funding availability was not identified in April, but I hope that tourism operator's are not deterred from applying for funding even though there is only two weeks left to do so" said the Member for Murchison.

"It is time we look at all the wonderful tourism and promotional opportunities within this diverse region and work together to showcase them and not miss an opportunity to access our share of federal government funding" said Ms Forrest.

15<sup>th</sup> June 2006

For further information, please phone 0419 879 524.

Local Tourism developer Brian Reeder is available to speak to the local media. Brian's phone number is 0402083925.