



MEDIA RELEASE

SENATOR THE HON NICK SHERRY

Minister for Small Business
Minister Assisting on Deregulation and Public Sector Superannuation
Minister Assisting on Tourism

COOKING SCHOOL LIFTS SOUTHERN FORESTS' TOURISM PROFILE

The Minister Assisting on Tourism, Senator Nick Sherry, has officially opened a unique attraction in the Southern Forests region - the Foragers Field Kitchen and Cooking School near Pemberton, made possible with funding of \$100,000 from the *TQUAL Grants* program.

"Pemberton is a local hub for the tourism industry in this region and the Foragers project will enhance this network," said Senator Nick Sherry at today's official opening.

"We all know the value of authentic culinary experiences in the memories of travellers and this region has some of Australia's finest fresh produce - from stone fruit to trout, to the highly prized black truffle," Senator Sherry said.

Foragers is run by Sophie and Chris Zalokar and offers educational tourism experiences through cooking school activities, field trips to local farms and vineyards, and events that promote the region's fresh produce, cultural food heritage and healthy eating.

The Australian Government's *TQUAL Grants* funding helped renovate, extend and fit out an existing building to house a commercial kitchen and dining room.

"Sophie's credentials are impeccable - chef, author, judge of produce, food consultant and a student of Maggie Beer at Pheasant Farm in the Barossa," Senator Sherry said.

"Our tourism industry needs innovative ideas such as these. Sophie and Chris have harnessed many facets for a memorable visit - great food, local produce and a stylish setting in one of Australia's best natural environments."

To date, the Australian Government has allocated more than \$8 million through the *TQUAL Grants* program and has made available an additional \$40 million over four years.

These projects strengthen the supply-side of Australia's tourism industry, with government funds matching private investment.

Application forms for the next round of *TQUAL Grants* can be found at www.ret.gov.au/tqual

PEMBERTON

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