



MEDIA RELEASE

SENATOR NICK SHERRY

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

LAURA SMYTH MP

Member for La Trobe

ITALIAN FLAVOUR TO HIGH COUNTRY TOURISM INVESTMENT

Victoria's High Country has a new tourist attraction with an Italian flavour to entice even more visitors thanks to Australian Government supported investment at Casa Luna.

The Australian Government's *TQUAL Grants* program has contributed \$91,000 in dollar-for-dollar funding towards the Casa Luna Gourmet Accommodation and Piazza Project at Myrree.

Member for LaTrobe, Ms Laura Smyth MP, has officially opened the project today.

The investment has doubled Casa Luna's accommodation and provided a wood-fired oven and Italian-style grill, giving visitors an even better gourmet experience.

"A passion for Italian food and wine is engrained in King Valley, attracting many visitors who enjoy a taste of Italian culture in every sense," Ms Smyth said.

"More visitors, seeking high-quality accommodation and authentic Italian cuisine, will bring more tourism income into the King Valley local economy.

"Boutique accommodation alongside the food and wine experience can be a magnet for local economic growth," Ms Smyth said.

Minister for Small Business and Minister Assisting on Tourism, Senator Nick Sherry said *TQUAL Grants — Tourism Quality Projects* funding helps regional tourism industries to be more innovative and competitive.

"The Australian Government has committed \$8.5 million to 117 projects in the latest round of TQUAL funding – and all but five are in regional areas," Senator Sherry said.

"Over the next four years, \$40 million is available for projects that develop innovative and strategic tourism products.

"Visitors spend around \$630 million a year in Victoria's High Country - and more than 1,900 tourism businesses in this region rely on this income to some extent."

The Casa Luna Gourmet Accommodation and Piazza project was announced as part of the 2009 round of funding from the *TQUAL Grants* program.

It is anticipated that the next round of funding for *TQUAL Grants — Tourism Quality Projects* will be open for applications in early 2012. Further information is available at www.ret.gov.au/tqual.

MYRRHEE

4 August 2011

Media contacts: Joe Scavo 0413 800 757 (Sherry)
Pauline Richards 0458 650 102 (Smyth)