

MARGARET RIVER GOURMET ESCAPE 2013

Statement by Minister for Tourism

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Minister for Tourism) [12.11 pm]: I rise to inform the house about the second Margaret River Gourmet Escape, which I launched this morning. The three-day food and wine festival will be held from 22 to 24 November. It will provide thousands of enthusiastic foodies and wine lovers with culinary tips and tricks from around 50 of the best international and Australian food and wine talent, while they sample delicious local produce and premium beverages. This year's event features an unparalleled line-up of world-class food and wine celebrities, including the legendary Heston Blumenthal, Rick Stein, Sat Bains, Alex Atala and Neil Perry. They and other celebrity chefs will host multiple events in stunning south west locations. The Gourmet Escape not only profiles the incredible diversity of wine and food in Western Australia, but also attracts visitors from national and international markets. Around 10 000 tickets have been sold to date, including almost 1 300 interstate and international packages. As well as the gourmet village at Leeuwin Estate, there will be a number of satellite lunches and dinners to encourage visitors to explore the region.

The 2013 event builds on the success of last year's Gourmet Escape, and promises to be bigger and better. In addition to the event itself, the festival's organiser, Brand Events, has commissioned a television series of six, 30-minute episodes to further showcase Western Australia and its producers to a global audience. In 2012, the program featured the Margaret River wine region and other locations, including Donnybrook, Manjimup, Bunbury and Nannup. It aired in Australia, the United Kingdom and throughout Asia. This year, the program, entitled *Recipes that Rock*, will be filmed mainly in the great southern region, and will feature highlights of the Gourmet Escape. The series will again be hosted by WA chef Matt Stone and UK musician-turned-cheesemaker, Alex James, the bass guitarist of United Kingdom rock band Blur. As well as the television series, Brand Events will assist Austrade and the South West Development Commission to run a trade mission with international food and wine buyers during the event. This program provides further valuable exposure and commercial opportunities for Western Australian producers. The Margaret River Gourmet Escape is supported by the state government through Eventscorp's regional events program, which is funded through royalties for regions. The government's long-term strategy is for the event to become the pre-eminent food and wine festival in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. The Margaret River Gourmet Escape is another example of how this government is successfully using events to promote tourism to our regions and raise Western Australia's profile in national and international markets. I encourage all members to support this extraordinary event.