**Eat Local Week & Winter Harvest Festival**

Agriculture is at the heart of the identity, economy and landscape of the Scenic Rim Region. Farmers are the foundation of the social networks and local food production so highly valued by residents and visitors alike. Both agriculture and tourism are also pivotal to the prosperity of the Scenic Rim. Together they contribute over $210 million annually to the local economy and account for over 30% of the registered businesses. They are also key growth industries and in 2011 the Scenic Rim Regional Council believed there was an opportunity to build on our emerging reputation as a preferred supplier of premium food products to Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

The concept of a new food event emerged early in 2012 as a community conversation about how to grow our food and farming sectors by positioning the Scenic Rim so that the inherent qualities were recognised and valued in key markets.

A unified marketing strategy with short, medium and long term objectives was developed to identify and market the food and agriculture in the region.

In 2014, after only three years, Eat Local Week (ELW) and the Winter Harvest Festival (WHF) continue to evolve as new community and commercial interests become involved in the events. The combined activities now represent a diverse package of 80 interconnected activities designed to promote the relationship between agriculture, food and tourism. All of the 2014 events occurred between the 28th June and the 6th July with the principal event, the Winter Harvest Festival, taking place on July 5th at the Aratula Sports Centre. ELW and the WHF were coordinated by the Scenic Rim Regional Council (SRRC) in partnership with multiple community and commercial organisations.

Together these events embrace diverse community expectations through activities that simultaneously address local issues associated with education, economic development and agriculture. But there are other benefits beyond promotion and dollars. The development of ELW & WHF also stimulates other activities in small towns, protects existing jobs and creates new business opportunities. These objectives correspond with the sustainable development aspirations in the Scenic Rim Community Plan as they support local farming communities and small-scale businesses. Benefits are therefore not only confined to economics and business, they embrace social and environmental outcomes, which are of interest to everyone in the Scenic Rim.

The next event is scheduled to occur between 27th June and 5th July 2015

Progress against the targets was as follows:

* 80 events supported in 2014.
* 15,500 consumers participated in the combined events.
* The average individual spend per head at all of the combined events was just under $61 per person
* $932,675 in direct spending by visitors
* Producers and businesses surveyed after the event reported an average weekly increase in turnover of 138%.
* The value of Media coverage generated by the combined events was calculated at $149,000

For a link to Landline see <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-07-19/whats-up-doc/5610002?section=qld>