

Press Release

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Beattie's toast to Queensland Wine

The Queensland Government will pour \$2 million over the next four years into helping to develop Queensland's wine industry, Premier Peter Beattie announced today.

"The Budget will allocate \$500,000 a year to the Department of Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development to support the industry," said Mr Beattie.

"We recognise the great potential of our wine industry to create new jobs, develop rural and regional centres, generate export earnings and provide new tourism experiences for visitors to our state.

"We aim to take Queensland wines to Australia, and to the world, through a strategy and action plan assembled by Wine Industry Development Minister Margaret Keech.

"The strategy provides a vision for the future development of the industry.

"Initiatives will focus on viticulture, research and development, regional promotion and development, web information, investment, and promotional opportunities for Queensland wines.

"Importantly, we will also work to integrate food and wine tourism, and strengthen effective and productive partnerships with stakeholders.

"We are encouraging wineries to upgrade their tourist experience through restaurant, accommodation and event facilities.

"We are working with the Queensland Wine Industry Association to develop existing and potential wine tourism trails throughout the State.

"And we are establishing an Australian-first College of Wine Tourism in Stanthorpe.

"Having Margaret Keech as Australia's first Wine Industry Development Minister and establishing a wine industry development division within her department proved our commitment to the industry.

"This new funding reinforces that commitment," Mr Beattie said.

Mrs Keech said she had established a project team in her department.

"We are facing new challenges but will work closely with the industry to

deliver mutually beneficial results," she said.

"The reaction of industry participants to the formation of the division has been overwhelming.

"We have already conducted an industry leaders' forum at Highfields outside Toowoomba and a series of regional workshops to discuss specific industry issues."

Mrs Keech said Queensland's standing as a wine producer had already been heightened.

"This is an industry with enormous potential. We are determined to tap into that potential, in partnership with industry," she said.

"The industry development strategy seeks to examine all sectors of the industry, from grape to glass.

"The initiative has progressing well and excellent momentum has been built up between my department and the industry.

"The industry response has been magnificent. They know they have been handed an unprecedented opportunity by Premier Beattie and are determined to repay that confidence."

Mrs Keech said she aimed to accelerate the changing perception about Queensland wines, both locally and nationally.

"Queensland wines are the equal of any in Australia, and we want to send this message to wine-lovers," she said.

"Queensland wine-makers are winning national and international awards.

"We will be working to help develop food and wine trails to link with tourism.

"We are serious about growing this industry, and about tapping into its enormous potential to generate dollars and jobs in regional Queensland."