



The Place To Be

Media release

Geoff Howard MLA, Member for Ballarat East

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\$7000 GRANT BACKS BALLAN FARMERS' MARKET STUDY

A farmers market at Ballan will be investigated with the support of a \$7000 grant announced today by Geoff Howard MP, State Member for Ballarat East.

A market would help sustain local food producers while boosting visitors to the historic township 80 kilometres west of Melbourne, Mr Howard said.

He said Moorabool Shire Council would assess the viability of a monthly market in an \$11,000 feasibility study.

Mr Howard said the funding was part of a \$2 million Victorian Government package to support farmers' markets as a community-based option for farmers to deliver their products direct to consumers.

"Ballan could be an important addition to the growing network of farmers markets across Victoria," Mr Howard said.

"Farmers' markets provide a healthy, affordable and fresh food supply for the local community, and enable people to get more information about the availability, seasonality and origins of their food.

"They can strengthen local agriculture by providing producers in a region with an opportunity to work together in identifying new business prospects, particularly in relation to supply chains.

"The overall concept fits well with Ballan's country town character and its emerging arts/hospitality businesses."

Mr Howard said a local market could generate new jobs as food production increases to supply the market.

"If the feasibility study recommends establishing a market, this could be an important new outlet for small food producers," Mr Howard said.

He said the market's potential to increase visitors and tourism in the town added to the importance of the study.

Moorabool Shire Mayor, Cr Michael Tudball welcomes the State Government funding.

"Council is delighted that the State Government is providing \$7,000 towards this initiative. Council will be funding the additional costs required to undertake the study.

"Community events such as farmers markets not only provide residents with another way in which to purchase food, but also enhance community participation in local activities and open up another opportunity for our district's farmers to sell their produce.

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“Ballan is continuing to grow and develop. The main street is currently undergoing a revitalisation. It seems logical that a farmers market commence in the town as a way to further boost the town’s vibrancy and attract visitors to the region.

“It is anticipated that the feasibility study will get underway in April 2009. Council has enlisted the expertise of Regional Development Company to carry out the study.

“Residents who wish to express interest in participating in the study should contact Council’s Strategic and Sustainable Development Unit on 5366 7100.

“I look forward to discovering the outcomes of the study,” Mayor Tudball said.

The study will assess likely support and demand for a market, producer interest in taking part as well as appropriate sites, management structure and the operations of existing markets and tourism in the region.