

Exports on the Mallee radar

By DEIRDRE GRAHAM

A group of Mallee producers is set to establish a cluster to investigate export opportunities for growers in the region.

The decision followed a successful China Export Forum held in Lameroo last Thursday which attracted approximately 40 to 50 people, giving them access to a range of inspirational speakers.

Chief executive officer of the Southern Mallee District Council, Tony Renshaw, said the forum was a chance for growers to receive "a lot of information, a lot of knowledge".

"We spoke about a whole range of things but particularly about the real export experience that other parts of Australia have had," Mr Renshaw said.

"We spoke about how the community acting collectively produces much better volume and financial yields (including) real experiences where groups had acted collectively

and increased their volume by 30 per cent and their financial yield by 70 per cent."

"There's an overwhelming sense that it (the cluster) is worthy of investigation and further development."

He said the cluster would work with State Government, Federal Government and local government.

"We think there will be some good progress over the next couple of months and with further consultation with the community there will be structures established in February next year," Mr Renshaw said.

"The next stage is really to do a lot of thinking and research and consultation.

"Some of the challenges for the southern Mallee include identifying and developing a brand and image and also to identify and confirm a region along the same lines as the Barossa Valley, the Coonawarra, the Napa Valley in California and other regions in western Europe."

Attendees at the meeting included

Jing Lee MLC, Tim Whetstone MP, Adrian Federick MP, Sean Keenihan (managing partner of Norman Waterhouse Solicitors and president of the Australia-China Business Council (SA branch)), Duncan MacGillivray (head of KI Pure Grain), Paul Graham (MS Strategy from WA), southern Mallee councillors Robert Sexton, Brian Toogood, Jeff Nickolls, Gordon Hancock, Neville Pfeiffer and Alfred Walker; along with Brenton Lewis from RDA and Mark Pye from Parilla Premium Potatoes.

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Tony Renshaw