

Media Release

A FRESH APPROACH TO FOOD AND WINE

Melbourne's reputation for culinary diversity and world-class food and wine will be showcased to a local, national and international audience when the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) opens in July 2009.

Purpose-built kitchens provide the team of nine permanent chefs with the best equipment and operating facilities to turn the freshest seasonal ingredients into an inspiring menu that will set a new benchmark for major Melbourne events.

The strength of the city's food and wine culture comes down to the availability of excellent produce and the MCEC has access to some of Victoria's best. The kitchen team sources seasonal produce from a well established network of suppliers across regional Victoria, from the freshest seafood and premium beef to artisan cheese producers and exotic fruit and vegetable growers. These include: Red Hill Cheese, Bill's Farm at Victoria Market; Sher Wagyu at Ballan; Salute Olive Oil; Green Eggs and Yarra Valley Salmon.

Executive Chef, Shaun Bowles said: "We prefer to use small, artisan suppliers to ensure the best possible quality and, in many cases, flexibility to produce to specific requirements. For large scale events, we give our suppliers plenty of notice so they can deliver the quantities required. We also go right back to the raw ingredient wherever possible and then utilise the equipment, skills and experience of our kitchen teams to do things like, smoke and cure salmon and prepare bread and pastries on site. This provides us with ultimate flexibility and also allows us to provide premium products affordably, especially for larger events."

The wine list is focused on premium Victorian producers from diverse growing regions across the state. Manager, Food and Wine, Frank Burger said: "We work directly with reputable wineries in each region to access hard to find wines as well as their more readily available products which allows us to offer our clients great wines at various prices."

There are no set menus at the MCEC - just a guide to the best produce of the season which allows for a food and wine experience tailored to each client's exacting requirements. "We don't allow the number of guests to determine the quality of the menu. Whether we are cooking for one or 1000 our attention to detail remains the same," said Burger.

Many of the centre's chefs have worked in leading restaurants around the world and bring a remarkable cross-pollination of culinary ideas and influences, depth of experience and talent to the kitchens, which can include providing memorable food and wine experiences for up to 7000 people per day.

-ends-

For further information please contact: Suzi O'Dell, Communications Manager MCEC on 03 9235 8216 or sodell@mcec.com