



Hon Tim Mulherin MP
Member for Mackay



Minister for Primary Industries,
Fisheries and Rural and
Regional Queensland

Queenslanders prepare to go Off the Eaten Track

What do you get when you mix Queensland's finest regional produce, a splash of wine, some passionate producers and one very excitable chef in a television series?

The result is *Off the Eaten Track* – a collaboration between the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) and Tourism Queensland, to air on Channel 7 in the lead up to Christmas.

Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland Tim Mulherin said the series was a celebration of the people who grow, catch and make Queensland produce.

“While *Off the Eaten Track* showcases how regional produce can be prepared, it is not just about cooking or travel – it is a revealing and entertaining exposé of the high-quality produce that comes from our state,” he said.

“Queensland has an increasing reputation both domestically and internationally for high quality fresh produce and wine and this series will help build it further.

“The series is about the people who are dedicated to the growth of Queensland's primary industries, which directly contribute an estimated \$5.2 billion to the state's economy annually.

“These businesses make a huge contribution to regional economic development and viewers will get just a taste of their everyday life and the challenges they face in bringing premium food and wine to the world's tables.

“Our \$3.3 billion beef industry, as well as Queensland's burgeoning seafood and tropical foods sectors, all feature in the show, in segments that reflect innovation in farming practice.”

Hosted by Alastair McLeod of *Ready, Steady, Cook* fame, and executive chef at Bretts Wharf restaurant, Hamilton and Tank restaurant in central Brisbane, the series explores the diversity and abundance of Queensland produce.

Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading Peter Lawlor said this diversity was reflected through the regions and businesses showcased in the program.

“Geographically, Queensland is Australia's second largest state, covering more than 173 million hectares,” Minister Lawlor said.

“Of this, almost 144 million hectares, or 83 per cent of the land area, is used for agriculture.

“Alastair explores the riches of Queensland’s culinary tourism offerings including regional food and wine festivals, cooking schools, breweries, coffee and cheese factories, wineries and cattle saleyards.

“From feasting on the rare tropical fruit ‘achacha’ in Ayr; learning to make Buffalo Mozzarella in Cairns, studying scallop aquaculture in Hervey Bay and profiling the birth of the locavore movement in the Whitsunday region, Alastair finds interesting surprises as he takes the road less travelled.”

Mr Mulherin said the series supported the growth of Queensland’s agricultural industries, in a fun format through which viewers could not only understand where their food came from, but also appreciate some of the science behind the food.

“DEEDI scientists are constantly working to support producers by researching innovations and technologies to add value and marketability to Queensland food,” Mr Mulherin said.

“One segment features research on Australian native plant foods, which will enable new, exciting eating experiences for consumers.

“Research on chick peas will also be in the spotlight – an important new Queensland crop of which Queensland production has an estimated current value of \$65 million.

“By continuing to provide innovative science to producers, they can continue to deliver the world-class clean, green produce that Queensland is famous for.

“I encourage viewers to join Alastair on this culinary journey to sample all that is uniquely Queensland over the coming weeks.”

The four part series *Off the Eaten Track* can be viewed on Channel 7 on Saturdays, at 7pm, commencing December 4, 2010 – check out www.queenslandholidays.com.au/eat for more information.

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