



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**1 July 2009**

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## **Farmers market founder recognised for services to the nation**

One of the founding members of the Capital Region Farmers Markets, local olive grower and dedicated Australian tourism advocate, Peter O'Clery, was made a Member (AM) in the prestigious General Division of the Order of Australia, announced last month.

It is an honour the father of five, and grandfather of ten is most proud of. After a long career in the tourism industry he was made an AM for 'service to the Australian tourism industry, particularly through the establishment of research and education centres, and to the community.'

Peter and his wife Caroline reside at 'Homeleigh', situated on the ACT/NSW border a few kilometres north of Canberra, where they have their own olive grove of about 2000 trees and produce a wide range of olive products. Aside from the year-long olive growing process, Peter contributes to the Rotary Club of Hall and played an instrumental role in getting Canberra's popular Saturday morning Capital Region Farmers Markets off the ground in 2004.

"The Farmers market was born out of the need to provide an opportunity for local growers to sell direct from the farm gate to the consumer. Rotary provided the platform for this to happen and from our humble beginnings with 18 stall holders in a small shed at EPIC in Watson, it has now become the region's and one of Australia's leading farmers market." Mr O'Clery said.

"Establishing the Capital Region Farmers Market as the success it is today is something I am very proud of. The market is a great forum for local and regional producers to exhibit their produce, connect with the locals and give back to the community. It also has tourism potential as visitors can sample the food and wine of the region.

"Our business has been able to establish a real identity and connection with not only consumers across the region but with restaurants, wholesalers and distributors who regularly visit the market to speak with us about our olives, and other growers. The market has become a real hub of commerce for local producers" Mr O'Clery said.

The market is a genuine farmers market with over 100 stalls offering a diverse range of fresh food and agricultural produce straight from the producer to the customer. All funds generated are fed back into regional communities and other projects chosen by the Rotary Club of Hall.



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Peter O'Clery has had a long career in the tourism industry. For more than a decade he was Chief Executive of the Australian Tourism Industry Association – the national peak body for travel and tourism. In 1995 he was a key figure in creating the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre, and he also became involved in agribusiness development.

As an olive grower, Peter took inspiration from many of the wine growers in the Canberra region. He is the current President of the Southern Olive Growers Association of NSW and at Homeleigh Grove is seeking to build a sustainable olive grove with minimum irrigation and the use of only organically recognised fertilizers and pesticides.

Peter and his wife Caroline have been very busy at Homeleigh Grove producing some great olive oils and table olives – both of medal winning quality. Table varieties grown include Manzanilla, Azapa, Seveillano and more recently Bouron, Hardy's Mammoth, Volos and Kalamata. They also produce a range of other olive products including infused oils, tapenade, dukkah and a skin care range.

Homeleigh Grove exhibit each weekend at the Capital Region Farmers Market where customers can taste and purchase their range of olive products, as well as free range chicken, duck and quail eggs, poultry and herbs and vegetables. The Capital Region Farmers Market is held every Saturday morning at Exhibition Park from 8 am to 11 am.

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**For more information, images or to arrange an interview, please contact Lauren Griffiths, Threesides, 0417 409 264 or [lauren.griffiths@threesides.com.au](mailto:lauren.griffiths@threesides.com.au)**