



MEDIA RELEASE

9 July 2009

Page 1 of 2

Farmers market creates new business opportunities in Canberra...and will impress chocolate lovers too!

Canberra's popular Saturday morning market, the Capital Region Farmers Market at EPIC, is creating business opportunities in Canberra. Since its inception in 2004, the market has grown from a mere 18 stalls attracting around 1000 customers, to over 120 stalls attracting around 5000 customers on a weekly basis. The market offers a diverse range of fresh food and agricultural produce and is popular amongst Canberrans and visitors from the region who come to taste and buy delicious fresh produce direct from the farm gate.

The reputation of the market attracts producers and growers from far and wide who come to exhibit each Saturday morning at Exhibition Park. Its popularity has created new business opportunities and has become a hub for the development of small business operators. One such business is *Lindsay & Edmunds*, makers of handmade organic chocolates.

"We started coming to the Capital Region Farmers Market from the Central Coast back in October 2008, and we are now there every week. Our chocolates have proved so popular in Canberra, and our market here has grown so rapidly, that we actually relocated ourselves and our business to Canberra", said Michelle Fahy, who co-owns Lindsay & Edmunds chocolates with her husband, Peter Edmunds.

Peter originally made his chocolates on the NSW Central Coast, selling them at Capital Region Farmers Market and other Canberra outlets, but the pair moved here in March this year. Lindsay and Edmunds is a boutique chocolatier that has created a range of exquisite organic chocolates using fine organic ingredients. The business was born out of Peter's love for the French chocolatier and Michelle explains how well the business has been received in Canberra.

"We are growing so rapidly. We love living in Canberra, and we find ourselves and our chocolate very well accepted here.

"Canberra has an extremely educated food market and the people are very environmentally aware – all of which fits in well with the Lindsay & Edmunds ethos," said Michelle.

The market is a forum for local and regional producers to exhibit their produce, connect with the locals and give back to the community as all funds generated are fed back into regional communities and other projects chosen by the Rotary Club of Hall. And the flow-on affects of the market attracting businesses such as Lindsay & Edmunds are clear.



MEDIA RELEASE

**9 July 2009
Page 2 of 2**

“Since moving to Canberra, we have employed two local staff, one assists Peter in the kitchen and the other assists with packaging. We have purchased new equipment for our chocolate making, increased production and will continue to do so which means we will employ more people in future.

“The Capital Region Farmers Market is also a good forum for linking like-minded growers together. The organic hazelnuts we use in our chocolates are grown locally at Loriendale Orchard, a certified organic orchard near Hall. Loriendale is another market stallholder who we met through the market. The nuts are picked and shelled by hand, delivered to us by hand at the market, and we use them to create our divine organic handmade chocolates,” Michelle continued.

Rotary Club of Hall spokesperson, Tony Howard, said “The market was originally developed as an opportunity to provide a link between the growers and consumers in our region. The growth of the concept has now led to the markets attracting and stimulating business in its own right.

“The retailers and growers at the market are the ones that connect the final products with consumers. It’s through the production process that many hundreds more producers are tied in to the markets, providing even more business and employment opportunities” Tony said.

Lindsay & Edmunds chocolates are sure to impress chocolate lovers, of which in Canberra there appears to be many. Using the finest Belgian certified organic chocolate, Belcolade, they have created many delicious varieties that have been designed by Peter to be savoured rather than consumed in large quantities. This year they introduced a new chocolate into the range, the ‘Mont Blanc’ – an organic Belgian milk chocolate base, capped in organic Belgian white chocolate flecked with organic vanilla bean encasing a whole roasted organic hazelnut, from the Loriendale Orchard of course! They exhibit at the Capital Region Farmers Market at Exhibition Park every Saturday from 7am – 11am.

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