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News release > Regional Showcase in Canberra a success

THE best of produce our region has to offer has been showcased in the nation's capital at the Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday Regional Showcase.

The mouth-watering menu featured tasty delights ranging from panfried prawns with creole spice to a duo of bruschetta pecorino, honey and fried capers, all made with produce from our region.

Guests washed down the delicious food with beverages like mango crush, featuring Bowen Tomato Company mango puree and Sarina Sugar Shed vodka, and espresso martinis made with Whitsunday Gold Coffee.

The event was hosted at Parliament House by Federal Member for Dawson George Christensen and Mayors Anne Baker, Jenny Whitney and Deirdre Comerford. Also in attendance was Ben Wearmouth, CEO RDA Regional Development Australia for our region.

Mayor Comerford, chair of Whitsunday ROC Regional Organisation of Councils, said "the evening was about bringing the Whitsunday region to Canberra and we did that through produce".

"We also highlighted the economic contribution our region makes to the national economy and talked about the opportunities to grow our regional economy," she said.

Mayor Whitney said the three councils covered by Whitsunday ROC represented an area of 90,000 square kilometres with a population of 180,000.

"We have a strong agribusiness sector, including one of the nation's largest sugar and bio commodity producers," Cr Whitney said.

"We are proud of the co-generation plant at Racecourse Mill, which supplies one-third of Mackay's electricity supply using a by-product from the milling process, and we have one of the largest winter produce growing regions in Australia."

Mayor Baker said the region had the Bowen and Galilee basins, the largest coal mining deposits in Australia, on its doorstep.

"And we have the highest grade metallurgical coal in the world in our region," Cr Baker said.

"We are also fortunate that our region has world-renowned tourism destinations, including the 74 Whitsunday islands and the Great Barrier Reef," she said.



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“More than 1.3 million visitors come to our region and spend more than \$1.1 billion per year and that is growing. The showcase was about saying we hope you enjoy the menu, our recipes and we would welcome a visit to our region.”

Dawson MP George Christensen said “we know how fantastic our region is, and how diverse”.

“However, there are many others, including Federal MPs and Senators from across the country, who have not had the chance to experience what Mackay, the Whitsundays and Isaac have to offer,” Mr Christensen said.

“Last night provided a great opportunity to show off our region and I can assure you people were very impressed,” he said.

“The producers who were involved in the event can be very proud of their contribution as we certainly gave them some food for thought about our region last night.”

A 38-page, A6-size regional recipe booklet, featuring recipes and information on produce suppliers and agritourism ventures from our region, was also produced by Whitsunday ROC for the showcase event.

Agritourism is a growing industry in the region, with field days held last month to help farmers cultivate ideas for new paddock to plate ventures.

Photo caption one: [The Regional Showcase menu included \(front\) kataifi prawns with green mango salad, \(back\) pulled pork sliders and \(left\) panfried prawns with creole spice.](#)

Photo caption two: [At the showcase in Canberra are Federal Member for Dawson George Christensen with \(from left\) Isaac Mayor Anne Baker, Mackay Mayor Deirdre Comerford and Whitsunday Mayor Jenny Whitney.](#)

Photo caption three: [Sharing a laugh at the Showcase are \(from left\) Federal Member for Capricornia Michelle Landry, Senator Ian Macdonald, Federal Member for Dawson George Christensen and Mackay Mayor Deirdre Comerford.](#)

Photos: Auspic (David Foote)

For further assistance contact:

Mackay Regional Council corporate communications coordinator Mark Sleeman

0438 606 699