

MEDIA RELEASE

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The *Go Organic Festival* kicks 25,000 goals!

In this land of contrasts, 25,000 people showed their true colors and enjoyed the sun on Saturday and then braved wet weather on Sunday to attend the inaugural *Go Organic Festival* at the Victoria Park Racecourse on Grand Final weekend September 24th & 25th.

The 150 *Go Organic Festival* stallholders celebrated a weekend of healthy food and beverages, stimulating music, speaker and children's programmes and participants exchanged great ideas and information about sustainable living with visitors from Adelaide, interstate and overseas.

"It was terrific to see so many people come to the Festival, particularly on a rainy Sunday. It demonstrated the level of commitment by a community that wants to have a choice in what they eat and the way they live their lives and also the impact they are having on the environment," Festival Convenor Gerry Butler said.

"We've received many congratulatory messages from both the public and the stall holders and the one thing they are asking is 'when's the next one?'" Gerry Butler said.

The centrepiece was Adelaide's first and Australia's biggest Farmers' Market with more than 70 stalls from the Willunga, Barossa, Limestone Coast and Macclesfield Farmers' Market vendors and local organic farmers.

"One of the challenges for a first time event like this is to get the quantities right and some of the stall holders sold out earlier than they expected. However, it was a valuable learning experience for us all and we'll all do better next time," Gerry Butler said.

The entertainment program included performances of music and dance from a host of talented local and international performers.

"The event created its own momentum as additional performers came on Sunday to take a slot in the program, including the Adelaide based and internationally recognised duo The Borderers," Gerry Butler said.

The *Amazing Drumming Monkeys*, *Contrary Mary* from the Knee High Puppeteers and the student Scarecrow Project, made possible through an Adelaide City Council, Arts and Living Culture Grant, were some of the many highlights of the stimulating *Go Organic Festival* children's programme.

Tasting Australia's Ian Parmenter cooked up a storm of his 'consuming passions' in the ETSA demonstration kitchen at 12.30 each day and the extensive and stimulating speakers programme includes presentations by David Holmgren, co-ordinator with Bill Mollison of the permaculture movement in Australia.

“The 1395 Adelaide’s 5AA Michael Keelan Weekend and 891 ABC Adelaide’s Ashley Walsh and Malcolm Campbell broadcasts certainly got the ‘organic message’ out to the radio audience and encouraged people to come to Victoria Park Racecourse,” Gerry Butler said.

“The coverage by Channel 9 , Rural Press, the Stock Journal, Acres Australia and Eco Voice in the lead up to the event ensured that everyone in Adelaide knew the Festival was on and I’m very appreciative of the level of media support provided for the weekend celebrations,” Gerry Butler said.

The National Association of Sustainable Agriculture, Australia (NASAA), hosted the *Go Organic Festival*, which was held in association with the 15th IFOAM World Organic Congress at the Adelaide Convention Centre.

“I’d like to thank all those involved in planning the Festival, the sponsors who made it possible for us to put on a free entry, family friendly event, all the stall holders who participated and the 25,000 who came during the weekend. It was all we hoped for and much more,” Gerry Butler said.

“Will it happen again? If the reaction and interest generated by the event this year is any indication, the answer is ‘watch this space’,” Gerry Butler said.

The Government of SA, the Adelaide City Council, NASAA, the Jeffries Group, Lawrie & Co, MACAROB and Burra Creek Wines were the major sponsors of the *Go Organic Festival*.

For further information about the *Go Organic Festival*, visit the Go Organic Festival page on the IFOAM Congress website at www.ifoam2005.info or ring 8352 7099.

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