



Ferguson: new vineyard website will boost regional Australian tourism

The Minister for Tourism, Martin Ferguson, has forecast the new vineyard website will create a boost for tourism in regional Australia, reports Travel Blackboard.

The website, VisitVineyards.com, promotes regional tourism by showcasing the food and wine highlights throughout the viticultural regions of Australia.

"Visitvineyards.com is a boost for the wine, food and tourism industries as it brings together more than 30,000 wine, food, and travel experiences across every region in Australia. This will help visitors discover what's going on, the places and products not to be missed, and information on their next wine or culinary destination," Mr Ferguson said at the Montalto Vineyard and Olive Grove.

He said that tourism spending in regional Australia will increase because better accessibility to information will mean more tourists will stay in the area for longer. The Minister also noted that because over 65 per cent of bookings are now made online, vineyard tourism is keeping up with modern trends.

The Government provided \$75,000 to fund the project, which is part of the Regional Tourism Program and the Australian Tourism Development Program.

Tourism Australia and the Government are moving into a new era of tourism marketing to attract more people to visit Australia. According to the latest report from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the number of international visitors arriving in Australia during the month of July increased by 9 per cent on the same period last year. In total, there were 531,600 international visitor arrivals to Australia during July 2008, and 5.7 million arrivals for the year ending July 2008.

International tourists to Australia need an [Australia travel visa](#), except for New Zealand passport holders. Visitors wishing to travel the country can apply for a short-stay tourist visa, or [ETA](#), which is valid for three months. The conditions of the visa mean that tourists cannot work at any time during their stay in Australia.