



## **Official Opening of VAMVVIA Expansion Site**

The Hon John Cobb, Member for Parkes and Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson formally opened the VAMVVIA expansion site on Wednesday May 4, 2005 in Dareton, NSW.

In addition to Mr Cobb, the opening was attended by John Forrest, Member for Mallee, representatives of the wine, dried and table grape industries and the Sunraysia Area Consultative Committee, the Mayors of Wentworth Rural Council and Mildura Rural City Council and other industry and community representatives.

In welcoming those attending, the Chairman of VAMVVIA, Mr Paul Croxton highlighted the level of cooperation from industry and community stakeholders and thanked the primary funding bodies, the Department of Transport & Regional Services (Regional Partnerships Program) and Horticulture Australia Ltd. He also acknowledged the significant input of NSW Department of Primary Industries, through the provision of land and services and members of the VAMVVIA Committee who had contributed in the planning phase of the expansion program.

Mr Croxton acknowledged the efforts of the Association's Research and Development Officer, Julian Connellan who was responsible for the development of the plant material, property design, installation of equipment and planting of the site.

He advised that the development had been planned using world's best practice in the design of the irrigation system, trellis design and effective on-farm use of irrigation waste water.

Mr Croxton commended the efforts of all VAMVVIA farm staff who had completed the development of the site in 7 months. The site consists of 18,500 high health status vines that had the potential to produce 1.5M cuttings annually. All mother vines used to source material for the development had been PCR tested and all were free of virus's known to be detrimental to grapevine health.

Mr Don Carrazza, Chairman of the Sunraysia Area Consultative Committee (SACC) acknowledged the success of the project, noting that the site had been transformed from a clear paddock to a completed rootstock and vinifera development in only 7 months.

He commended the efforts of the SACC and VAMVVIA staff who worked closely during the planning stages and identified opportunities for community benefit through increased employment opportunities when the property was in full production.

In particular, Mr Carrazza acknowledged that the passion, particularly of VAMVVIA Chairman Paul Croxton and General Manager Michael Pullen for this project had been a big plus for the viticultural industry. He stated that VAMVVIA now has national recognition for the provision of the best quality planting material in Australia.

Ms Delia Dray, Manager, Horticulture Industry Development, NSW Department of Primary Industries advised guests that the NSW Department were pleased to have a long term relationship with VAMVVIA. Ms Dray announced that the NSW Government was currently in negotiation with VAMVVIA to provide additional land adjacent to the development site that would secure sufficient land for VAMVVIA's long term future.

In his address, Mr Cobb commended VAMVVIA for the Association's vision and identified that projects like the VAMVVIA expansion development were always successful when industry and community acted in partnership. Mr Cobb acknowledged the significant contribution that the grape industry was making to the National economy, noting that the wine industry in Sunraysia and the Murray Valley region produced 30% of the wine grapes grown in Australia and that the region was the largest producer of Dried and Table Grapes in Australia.

He emphasised the need for grape producers throughout Australia to be able to access high health status vines to ensure production was of the highest quality.

At the conclusion of the official opening, 35 invited guests enjoyed morning tea at the Dareton Research Station.