

**Hawkesbury Harvest
Business Plan**

May 2004

Section 2

Hawkesbury Harvest Model of Community Development

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Table of Abbreviations

BHSC	Baulkham Hills Shire Council
DOTARS	Department of Transport and Regional Services
DSRD	Department of State and Regional Development
DUAP	Department of Urban Affairs and Planning
FGT	Farm Gate Trail
GWSEDB	Greater Western Sydney Economic Development Board
HCC	Hawkesbury City Council
HAWKESBURY HARVEST	Hawkesbury Harvest
HSC	Hornsby Shire Council
RAP	Regional Assistance Programme
UWS	University of Western Sydney

An Invitation

This business plan is a living document. We have placed it on our web site for all to see. If you live in Sydney or are a visitor to this wonderful city you are a stakeholder in Hawkesbury Harvest by the very fact that you eat. Hawkesbury Harvest is the local ingredient of Sydney's dynamic and evolving food culture.

Hawkesbury Harvest has been created to improve the quality of life of as many people as possible who have association with the produce and products resulting from the agricultural industries, associated agribusiness and other complementary businesses located within the Sydney region.

The farm gate value of agriculture production in this region is estimated at more than \$1 billion per annum¹. This represents at least 12% of NSW's total agricultural production grown on approximately 1% of the state's agricultural land. The value of vegetables produced in Sydney as they pass through the farm gate on their way to market is estimated at \$250 million per annum. Of all the fresh leafy vegetables consumed in Sydney up to 90% are grown in Sydney. Market gardens exist as far east as Botany near Sydney's International Airport and as far west as the Richmond Lowlands at the base of the Blue Mountains. Over 11,000 people are employed full time on Sydney farms. The North-West sector accounts for more than 50% of this economic activity.

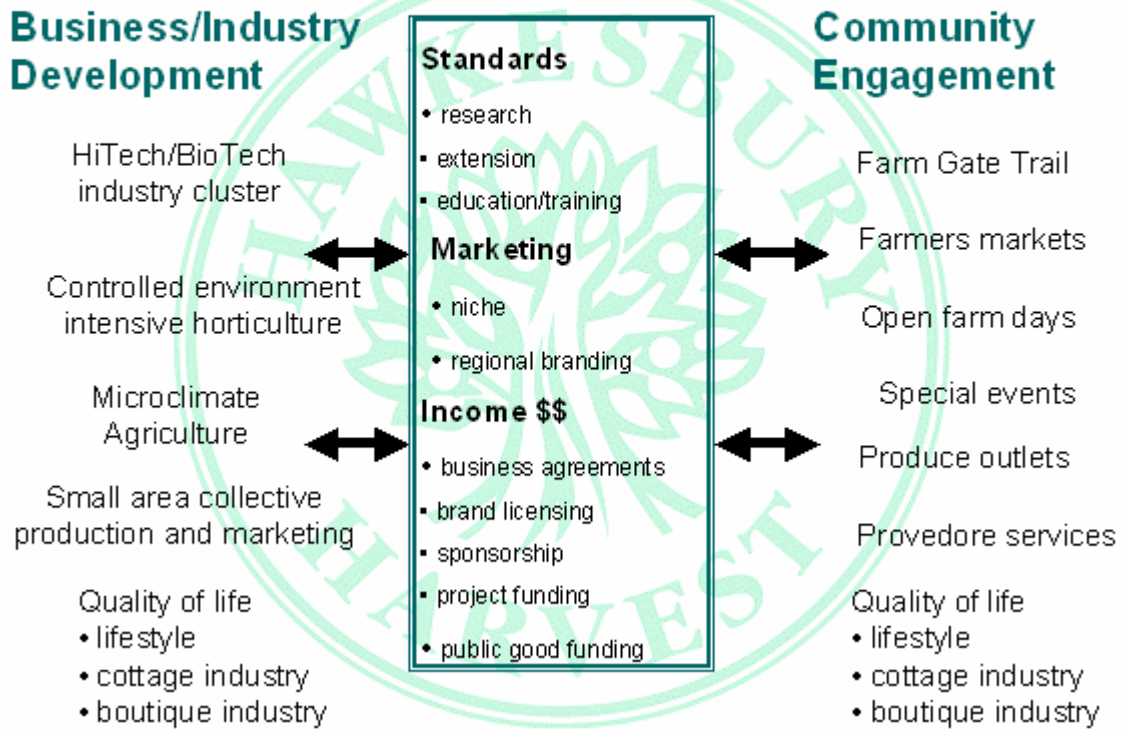
We encourage you to become involved in how Hawkesbury Harvest operates. We are creating something that has an every increasing appeal to more and more people at local, regional, national and international levels.

We invite and welcome your suggestions of how you think Sydney's local agriculture can be improved through the Hawkesbury Harvest process. To find out more please read on. We believe we have an interesting story to tell.

¹ Gillespie, P.D., and Mason, D., 2002, *The Value of Agriculture in the Sydney Region (Draft)*, NSW Agriculture, Sydney.

Section 2: The Hawkesbury Harvest Model of Community Development

Hawkesbury Harvest Potential



Hawkesbury Harvest has two strategic potentials; Business/Industry Development in Agribusiness and Community Engagement of agriculture in the Hawkesbury Region.

Innovation in agribusiness is fostered by Hawkesbury Harvest activities and aims to realize the potential of biotechnologies, intensive production, on-farm microclimate management, and regional production and marketing cooperative efforts. Community engagement with the agri-culture of the Hawkesbury Region is fostered by making that culture accessible to the community through the Farm Gate Trail, farmers markets, open farms, special events, produce outlets and providedoring services. These two strategic potentials in industry development and community building will bring important learning and social capital to the region in the areas of standards, marketing and economic benefit. These have long term potential in:

- creating a research context and catalyst for sustainable agriculture
- creating the vehicle through which extension agencies implement programs for the farming community of the Hawkesbury
- creating the agri-cultural context for education/learning in our agribusiness and host communities
- creating and maintaining niche market opportunities
- creating and maintaining regional brand and identity
- creating business relationships between agriculturalists and other sectors of the economy in tourism, education and retail sectors

- creating new income streams through licensing of the Hawkesbury Harvest brand
- creating new opportunities for corporate support of an agri-cultural future in the Hawkesbury
- creating the organizational infrastructure for expending innovation and development funding for the region
- creating the mechanism through which public good funds can be expended in support of agri-culture in the Hawkesbury

Hawkesbury Harvest is a process that facilitates engagement with and thus ownership of the outputs and outcomes of that process by its stakeholders. What follows is a distillation of those outputs and outcomes from numerous workshops, meetings, seminars etc conducted since the organisation began in March 2000. The following plays a significant part in determining what realistic goals Hawkesbury Harvest should pursue.

Hawkesbury Harvest has successfully developed the following:

- Farm Gate Trail
- Open Farm Days
- Hawkesbury Harvest Farmers & Gourmet Food Market (Castle Hill)

It aims to develop the following as a matter of priority:

- Industry Development (including regional branding)
- Special Events
- Education

Through its products and services Hawkesbury Harvest is establishing a sustainable relationship with the regional and greater Sydney community which are increasingly valuing the contribution made by the Hawkesbury's rural amenity to the quality of all life in the Sydney Basin. This rural amenity is inherently linked to the environment and agriculture and the associated business/industry. It is also a major contributor to the depth of the region's social capital, which is the source of its unique community and socio-economic character.

Hawkesbury Harvest aims to make the food (and wine) experience enjoyable for people whether they are in the Hawkesbury region or in their personal living space. Food is the catalyst for other local and regional businesses and industries to gain leverage for their ongoing development e.g. restaurants, B&Bs and other forms of agriculture such as the flora and fibre industries.

Opportunities exist for others to be a part of the ever-increasing success of Hawkesbury Harvest. They include:

Opportunities for Individuals and Groups

Hawkesbury Harvest offers opportunities for people and groups to become involved with the organisation in a number of ways. In a formal sense there are three levels of membership including **'Friend of Hawkesbury Harvest'**. Your relationship with Hawkesbury Harvest will include one or more of the following:

- You will become a member of a community based organisation that is made up of small to medium sized farms and associated businesses that support the idea of retaining the rural and scenic amenities across the Region.
- The core business of Hawkesbury Harvest is to provide the many visitors to the region with a food, flora, fibre and wine experience while bringing viability back to the small farms.
- Associated businesses that can leverage from Hawkesbury Harvest include those in the hospitality, environmental, arts, heritage and community finance industries.
- Hawkesbury Harvest is increasingly attracting national and international recognition of the region.
- We are passionate about providing a 'farm' experience for children, a life-style alternative for families, the ability to purchase fresh, locally grown produce, all made possible by the Farm Gate Trail.
- The numerous local, regional and national awards received by Hawkesbury Harvest and its Members over the past three years are testament of our success.
- The food journalists and lifestyle shows that have featured the Region and our Members is numerous.
- The Hawkesbury Harvest Farmers and Gourmet Food Markets at Castle Hill Showground on the second Saturday of the month attracts thousands to the Hills Shire.
- The importance of the tourist \$ that Hawkesbury Harvest brings to the region has been recognised by the Restaurants, Hotels, Tour Operators etc. on more than one occasion.
- The strong working relationship Hawkesbury Harvest has established with local, state and federal government bodies, the local universities and areas of health has been invaluable and so it goes on
- You will be promoting the importance and recognition of what the rural lands of the Hawkesbury region contribute to the quality of life of the greater Sydney basin.

An opportunity also exists for individuals to be a **'Volunteer for Hawkesbury Harvest'** and provide assistance on one of its subcommittees associated with:

- The Farm Gate Trail
- Open Farm Days
- Special Events
- Hawkesbury Harvest Farmers and Gourmet Food Market
- Industry Development (including regional branding)
- The administration of the organisation

Send an email of your expression of interest in becoming a 'Friend' or 'Volunteer' to:
info@hawkesburyharvest.com.au

Opportunities for Corporations

Hawkesbury Harvest provides corporations with the opportunity to exercise 'corporate social responsibility' which is based on the premise that companies need to take responsibility for their actions outside of a "profit at all cost" culture. The most common understanding of the term encompasses:

- Ethical decision-making
- Accountability for the impact of corporate activities on the community and the environment
- Human resource management practices
- Occupational health and safety practices
- Observance of basic human rights
- Interaction with the community

Opportunities for Government

Hawkesbury Harvest provides the three levels of government with the opportunity to support the Hawkesbury Harvest Vision Ideals (see below).

Hawkesbury Harvest is working with the NSW Government to implement the 'Strategic Plan for Sustainable Agriculture – Sydney Region'. It is also working with an increasing number of Local Government Councils to assist in the implementation of the recommendations arising from their rural lands studies. One of the greatest challenges facing Sydney is how it will retain the many social, economic and environmental benefit sustainable agriculture offers in the context of the huge population increases being planned for. This will only occur through planning that.

- Recognises the forms of agriculture that will enable Sydney to truly be a sustainable city by maintaining the capacity to make a significant contribution to its own food supply – e.g. hi-tech, intensive, extensive, organic, floodplain, urban, niche and community gardens
- Identifies the land consistent with these forms
- Provides the security of place and the essential resources so people will have the confidence to invest in agriculture for the long term

Hawkesbury Harvest Vision

Our vision articulates the following ideals and values.

VISION IDEALS AND VALUES

- Security of place for agricultural activities in the Hawkesbury region
- Security of resources such as land, labour, water, infrastructure and services for agricultural activities in the region
- Equity for Hawkesbury region agriculture as a land use and for those involved
- Economic viability of agriculture and associated business
- Agribusiness contributing to the region's social culture and environmental health
- Retention and enhancement of the Hawkesbury region's rural amenity
- Quality produce, products and services that reflect consumer requirements
- Human activity based on quality relationships between people and people and people and all forms of life
- Development of the global/regional interface at individual, corporate and government levels

RESPECT - RESPECT - RESPECT

Vision

The Hawkesbury is valued locally, regionally, nationally and internationally as a wonderful place for people to live or visit to experience its local produce and products, cultural heritage, natural heritage, sense of community and the many ways in which people benefit from and celebrate these things.

MISSION

Hawkesbury Harvest is a community based organisation committed to improving the economic viability and sustainability of local agriculture

Strategy Assumptions

Hawkesbury Harvest's actions are based on the following assumptions:

1. People are self motivated to want to achieve their potential
2. The responsibility of government is to ensure the necessary social and economic infrastructure, underpinned by environmental standards, is in place to enable people to achieve their potential
3. A balance of bottom up (community and industry) and top down (government and multi-national organisations) regional development using appropriate processes empowers people to achieve their potential
4. Developing strategic alliances and partnerships with other categories of social, economic and environmental capital at both the regional and broader societal levels significantly enhances the potential for small scale, medium scale and high-tech urban perimeter (peri-urban) agriculture to become sustainable. In so doing it offers a competitive form of triple bottom line (social, economic and environmental) land use
5. Government recognises the public good outcomes of the Hawkesbury Harvest process and will provide funding accordingly
6. Hawkesbury Harvest recognises the private good outcomes of the Hawkesbury Harvest process and will establish mechanisms that will generate a commensurate income stream into the organisation

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Treats

In March 2003 a SWOT analysis was carried out the results of which were shown in Table I

Reassuringly, many more strengths and opportunities were identified than threats or weaknesses. Several main threads can be discerned from the SWOT analysis. There was agreement that one of the strengths of the Hawkesbury region was the fact that it has had a long history as an agricultural area. It also has the advantage of being close to Sydney. Both these characteristics could be used to form the basis of a regional brand that would differentiate Hawkesbury Harvest produce in the marketplace.

However, during the SWOT analysis it was also recognised that the majority of growers in the Hawkesbury region are only small operators and they lack the skills to enable them to take advantage of new market opportunities. It will therefore be necessary for Hawkesbury Harvest to help members to develop their individual businesses through providing the necessary training and through helping to identify potential opportunities.

A key threat that was identified in the SWOT analysis was that Government seed funding was finite and Hawkesbury Harvest would have to find ways to finance the private good elements of its operation in the near future. One way of doing this would be to explore new opportunities that have the potential to provide additional revenue to Hawkesbury Harvest. Another way would be to attract sponsors or advertisers who were interested in becoming involved in individual initiatives of Hawkesbury Harvest.

Hawkesbury Harvest is currently registered as a non-profit making incorporated company. As it becomes necessary for Hawkesbury Harvest to become financially independent, and as some of these new business opportunities become reality, it will be necessary for the Association to adopt a more appropriate business structure.

Table 1: SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Country/clean air/vistas ▪ Farms/open space/animals ▪ Community feel ▪ Heritage/history ▪ Strong/steadfast ▪ Sydney's food bowl ▪ Agri tourism ▪ Philosophy – maintain agriculture ▪ Partnerships working ▪ Learning experience for city people to taste fresh product and speak to producers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to balance tourism/agriculture ▪ Members of Hawkesbury Harvest don't appreciate the strength of appeal of the lifestyle ▪ No central "place" shop/home ▪ No provedore to provide goods ▪ FGT operators not to standard or open (improving) ▪ Licensing regulations for restaurants ▪ Questionable relevance to B&Bs ▪ No tourism icon in the Hawkesbury ▪ Lack of signage ▪ Lack of agreed standards ▪ Local market is less \$\$\$ than city ▪ Primarily small operators ▪ Lack of education and training will mean we will stagnate
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proximity to Sydney ▪ Growth of tourism ▪ Create a tourism icon within the Hawkesbury region ▪ Hawkesbury Harvest product into restaurants / B&Bs ▪ City people want to taste fresh produce and build relationship with producers ▪ Premium prices for product ▪ M2 and Windsor Road upgrades ▪ Appeal of location for functions ▪ Advertise a provedore business ▪ Link to nature experience from city ▪ Build on local trade ▪ Hawkesbury Harvest shop ▪ Sell one another's product ▪ Wine industry development ▪ Herbs ▪ Tour links – B&Bs/farms/restaurants ▪ Industry development ▪ Links with Earthcare Centre UWS and Wilderness Centre Bilpin ▪ Work with UWS – use heritage angle and link with sustainable agriculture ▪ Rouse Hill Regional Centre ▪ Export opportunities/central packing ▪ Co-operatives ▪ Expand membership to large operators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sydney's ignorance of where/what the Hawkesbury is ▪ Hawkesbury seen as a destination for day trips not overnight stays ▪ Urban development ▪ Lack of funding ▪ Only small operators ▪ Zoning of agricultural land

Concepts, Ideas, Points of Clarification

Public Good

Regional identity is an increasingly emerging outcome from the recognition the Hawkesbury Harvest brand is gaining in the market place through the Farm Gate Trail and other Hawkesbury Harvest regional activities. Through these activities Hawkesbury Harvest is playing a significant role in putting 'The Hawkesbury' on the map as a place to visit, stay and perhaps live. In the past when asked what was their understanding of 'The Hawkesbury' the greater majority of people would say "Brooklyn". Today because of the promotion of the Farm Gate Trail more and more people regard the Hawkesbury as the area extending from Brooklyn in the east to the Bilpin in the west.

There is also a significant public good outcome associated with the establishment of Hawkesbury Harvest as a regional brand. It has the capacity to have people recognise what the local agriculture contributes to the sense of community, prosperity, pride, human well being, amenity and general quality of life in the region

This regional identity outcome is of a public good nature. For example it creates a more marketable product for organisations such as Tourism NSW who develop tour packages on a regional basis. For the host community it gives people a sense of identity and differentiation of place and in that regard will be seen by many as a desirable place to live and hence an important driver for regional growth. This has social capital building outcomes that contribute to the future health of the region. For this reason 'Public contribution' would assist in continuing this important image-building work.

Private Good

Capitalising on the potential demand for produce, products and services that are grown in the Hawkesbury region and branded with the Hawkesbury Harvest logo is of a private good nature. Individuals, groups and organisations can utilise the Hawkesbury Harvest brand to their financial advantage and thus to the advantage of the Hawkesbury Harvest organisation through income generating mechanism such as leasing of the brand.

The Hawkesbury Region – variations on a theme

Hawkesbury Harvest has a range of existing and potential products and services. The 'Hawkesbury region' can vary according to the product or service. For example:

- **The Farm Gate Trail** is limited in the main to the Hornsby, Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury local government areas (LGAs). The reason for this is that it provides a compact agritourism product that is manageable not only for Hawkesbury Harvest but also for the consumer of its products and services.
- **Regional branding** will be applied to produce, products and services that originate in the area of the Hawkesbury River Catchment, with initial

emphasis on Sydney's North-West sector for the purposes of establishing the brand. This ensures the Hawkesbury Harvest brand secures and retains meaningful market equity and identity.

However in saying that it is important to point out that in applying these boundaries Hawkesbury Harvest has no intention of competing for the business of growers who operate in similar organisations in the Hawkesbury region.

Hawkesbury Harvest is a Learning Organisation

Hawkesbury Harvest is a learning organisation. It is a value-based process that enables people to cope with change. Mistakes made are not seen as such but rather as providing beneficial learning. The approach is holistic in nature and easily accommodates the three elements of sustainability – social and economic development that at least minimises its impact on the environment and at best sustains or enhances it.

Hawkesbury Harvest is therefore organic by nature. Its growth so far has been recognised as extraordinary. This is due to the process encouraging and promoting creativeness within those who are involved with it.

Complementarity with other Strategies, Plans, Reports and Programs

Hawkesbury Harvest is complementary with the following:

- The whole-of-government and community developed Strategic Plan for Sustainable Agriculture – Sydney region (NSW Agriculture 1998)
- Baulkham Hills Rural Lands Study 2001, Baulkham Hills Shire Council
- Camden Rural Lands Study 2000, final copy, Camden Shire Council
- Department of State and Regional Development's Regional Food, Wine and Tourism Network
- Grow Employment Council Strategic Regional Plan
- Hawkesbury Social Plan 2000, Hawkesbury City Council
- Hawkesbury Sustainable Agriculture Development Strategy 1997
- Hornsby Rural Lands Study 1995, Hornsby Shire Council
- Houston P.D, Revaluing The Fringe: Some Findings On The Value Of Peri-Urban Agriculture In Australia, Australian Journal of Regional Studies.
- Liverpool Rural Lands Study 1994, Liverpool City Council
- National Trust Mission Statement
- Penrith Rural Lands Study 2001, Penrith City Council
- 'Rural Tourism potential within the North Western Sydney Region – Volume 1&2', Associate Professor Robyn Bushell, Ian Knowd, John Streckfuss, Dr Russell Staffiff, Jenny Scott and David Taylor, UWS Hawkesbury; March 1999
- Sinclair, I., 2002, The Rural Planning Wheel, Preservation of Agricultural Land, Rural Planning, www.ruralplanning.com.au
- Tourism Hawkesbury Business Plan
- Tourism NSW Strategic Plan
- 'Tourism Action Plan for Greater Western Sydney'; Larry Dwyer, Robyn Bushell, Ian Knowd, Colin Sheringham, Sharon Kemp; April 1995.
- Wollondilly Agricultural Lands Study 1993, Wollondilly Shire Council
- Draft Wyong Valleys Study Planning Report 1998, Wyong Shire Council

Goals

There are the two overarching goals that will determine the objectives of Hawkesbury Harvest for the next 3-5 years.

1. To provide advice, facilitation, support and encouragement to the members of Hawkesbury Harvest in developing their businesses and their relationship and stake holding with agriculture in the Hawkesbury region.
2. To achieve an appropriate balance in funding of private and public good activities of the organisation

Products and Services

Existing Products

1. *Farm Gate Trail*

The Farm Gate Trail is the foundation product of Hawkesbury Harvest. It resulted from the development of a strategic alliance between agriculture and tourism. It is a very successful product. It is providing Sydney residents and visitors to Sydney with an experience that many want to repeat. It plays a significant role in closing the gap between the farmer and the consumer (the city/country divide) by bringing them in touch with one another. It has provided small farmers and other associated business operators with a new and increasing income stream that is enhancing the viability of those small farms and businesses. The 2004 Farm Gate Trail map has 42 destinations that people can visit scattered across the NW sector of the Sydney Basin in the Hornsby, Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury local government areas.

2. *Hawkesbury Harvest Farmers and Gourmet Food Market*

This product began with the first market at Castle Hill Showground in August 2002. It has grown from 30 stalls and 6000 customers at that initial market to more than 50 stalls with up to 10,000 customers. It was developed by a subcommittee of Hawkesbury Harvest and was underwritten to the tune of \$1500 by the organisation to get it off the ground. It ran at a profit from day one. It is regarded as one of the top three Farmers Markets in Sydney. It is held on the second Saturday morning of each month. As with the Farm Gate Trail this product provides the farmer and those who value-add with another marketing mechanism. It also meets the needs of the increasing number of consumers who want to deal face to face with the people who grow or value-add the food they eat.

3. *Open Farm Days*

People of many cultures enjoy Open Farm Days. The onus of preparing for these events rests with individual members. Hawkesbury Harvest assists by promoting the event through its promotional mechanisms. Penrith Valley Oranges provided an example of just how successful an Open farm Day can be. Ivan Glover, manager of Penrith Valley Oranges heralded the beginning of the 2002 orange season by holding an Open Farm Day on the long weekend in June. He and a number of other farmers of produce such as honey and vegetables made over

\$20,000 in sales from the 6000 people who attended the event on the Saturday and Sunday. The event was not held in 2003 because of the drought. It was held again in 2004.

4. Special Events

Hawkesbury Harvest is involved with and/or promotes a number of Special Events such as the Farming Small Areas Expo at the Hawkesbury Show Ground at Clarendon, Happy Dog Day at Fagan Park Galston and Orange Blossom Festival at Castle Hill. One event the organisation plans to establish is an annual Hawkesbury Long Lunch where food in all forms and wine of the Hawkesbury will feature for one day of the year

Potential Products and Services

Hawkesbury Harvest has identified a number of important industry development activities that have great potential to enhance regional identity, business and employment growth, industry and innovation, and quality of life. These activities will need seed funding from appropriate corporate community and government agencies to support their implementation. **Without these strategic activities the momentum that Hawkesbury Harvest has achieved in industry development to date will be put at risk, perhaps even halted.**

Regional Branding

Regional branding underpinned by appropriate standards has been identified as the product that provides the most potential for Hawkesbury Harvest to develop a sustainable income stream to meet the private good elements of its operation. The licensing of the Hawkesbury Harvest brand will provide the major source of income. Hawkesbury Harvest is working with Freehills to establish the appropriate form of trade-marking and associated protocols.

Regional branding will provide the point of differentiation in the market place for services provided, and produce and product grown and manufactured in the Hawkesbury region to determined standards. Consumers relate easily to this marketing concept. The branding can also play a catalytic role in the development of the various industry sectors such as those associated with food, fibre, wine, and flora production.

There is also a significant public good outcome associated with the establishment of Hawkesbury Harvest as a regional brand. It has the capacity to have people recognise what the local agriculture contributes to the sense of community, prosperity, pride, human well being, amenity and general quality of life in the region

Strategy: Seek the appointment of a Regional Branding Coordinator

Product Development in Food and Wine

Hawkesbury Harvest has identified a need for coordinated product development in Regional Food and Wine. This need arises out of the disparate and diverse agricultural production of the Region and the nature of the producers, being small to medium holdings with limited resources for coordinated marketing and product development activity. A coordinator would investigate and implement industry development in the following areas.

Food and Wine Culture

The principal role of any coordinator will be product development and coordination of food and wine experiences within the region. This will require working with local producers to build capacity and supply of food and wine products and their associated experiences (eg; on-farm, restaurant and produce outlets)

1. Provedore Services

An increasing number of local restaurants and restaurants from other areas of Sydney are enquiring as to how they can access Hawkesbury region produce and value added product to include on their menus. There may very well be an opportunity for an entrepreneur to lease the Hawkesbury Harvest Brand to create the 'Hawkesbury Harvest Provedore Service' or something similar.

2. Produce Outlets

An opportunity exists for Hawkesbury Harvest to set up produce stores and farmers markets that would at least provide outlets for all produce available on the Farm Gate Trail and at most also act as outlets through which other regions would sell their product

Hawkesbury Harvest is a partner with Lend Lease in the Rouse Hill Regional Centre. This provides an opportunity for Hawkesbury Harvest to have a produce outlet as part of the shopping complex associated with the Centre. This idea is being discussed with Lend Lease. Such a facility would provide an enormous opportunity to market the Hawkesbury region and its businesses and events associated with Hawkesbury Harvest.

3. Export

In the second half of the 1990s the concept of an Agriculture Export Centre in Sydney's North West arose out of a growing regional interest in developing local capacity for export markets.

In 1997, the North Western Sydney Regional Development Organisation commissioned a feasibility study for an export agriculture centre. The study found that for a number of reasons, the development of an integrated Export Agricultural Centre in the Hawkesbury region providing the full range of export support functions in a dedicated centre would not be feasible:

The study determined that a significant number of export markets, particularly in Asia are very brand orientated and the key to export success may therefore lie in developing branded products. Without a strong brand, produce from the

Hawkesbury region will have no recognition in the market place and will therefore have to compete solely on the basis of price.

The study outcomes did not take into consideration the export potential that may arise from a concept such as Hawkesbury Harvest which is based on releasing people's creativity rather than providing rigid structures such as an Agriculture Export Centre. Therefore efforts to develop a Hawkesbury Harvest brand for the Australian market should continue and when successful, will form the basis for developing the brand for export usage.

4. Niche Markets

Hawkesbury Harvest was instrumental in the introduction of an agricultural niche production and marketing strategy in Hawkesbury region. This strategy is known as the Hawkesbury Agricultural Retention through Diversification and Clustering Project. It is a community-driven vision for sustainable rural development including diversification, increased productivity and sustainable land use based on quality information on the land resource and community needs. There are three essential components:

- Surveying critical factors affecting what you can do with your land e.g. soil mapping and microclimate surveys.
- Establishing the right balance of farming activities based on community support, personal needs and the restraints of the land and climate.
- Developing the community/individual mechanisms to process and profitably market farm produce.

Hawkesbury City Council is the project proponent. The concept has the potential to be extended right across the Hawkesbury region. Potential crops of project include:

- Specialty vegetables
- Native foods
- Cut flowers
- Herbs
- Alternative crops

Strategy: Seek the appointment of a Regional Food and Wine Coordinator