



NEW SOUTH WALES

# MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 24 July, 2009

## **Ian Macdonald**

**Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Energy,  
Minister for Mineral Resources, Minister for State Development**

### **Breakthrough for Griffith - Agricultural Research Station will remain open**

The Griffith agricultural research station will be retained, following overwhelming support for the facility from the community, Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald announced today.

It follows the announcement earlier this month that the site would close and staff would relocate to the Murrumbidgee Irrigation facility in Griffith.

A meeting was held last week between the Minister and a delegation led by Country Labor MLC Tony Catanzariti.

“I have listened to the community and after strong representations from the steering committee, I have decided the Griffith site will remain open,” Mr Macdonald said.

“The community’s voice has really been heard loud and clear on the issue and this agricultural resource will remain in public hands.

“The creation of the new Department of Industry and Investment means that more opportunities for cost savings can now be explored.

“A steering committee formed last year included stakeholders from the rice, wine and citrus industries; Murrumbidgee Irrigation representatives; Griffith Council; and NSW Department of Primary Industries representatives.

“I have accepted the steering committee's recommendations for immediate increased cost recovery at the site.

“Tony Catanzariti has put in a lot of energy and worked hard lobbying me to keep the site open and he certainly has fought a tough battle on behalf of his community.

“I would also like to acknowledge the Chair of the steering committee Mike Hedditch, the Chair of Murrumbidgee Irrigation Dick Thompson, the Mayor of Griffith Mike Neville and NSW Farmers association Treasurer Charles Armstrong for their efforts on this issue.”

Country Labor MLC Tony Catanzariti said he was thrilled by the result.

“This is a win for everyone in Griffith and the Riverina, especially farmers and industry,” Mr Catanzariti said.

“Since last November I have been working hard with industry and the community to find a solution to keep the Griffith Centre for Irrigated Agriculture open.

“This is great news for the staff. It means their important work will continue to be carried out here.

“I am pleased the support from the community has helped achieve this great result and I would like to thank everyone for all their efforts.”

NSW Farmers Association Treasurer Charles Armstrong thanked the farmers for their support since last year.

“This is a great outcome for farmers in the Riverina and I am pleased that the perseverance and lobbying from industry and the committee helped secure these important services for the Riverina.

“The Griffith site is an important asset for the community. It carries out advisory, regulation, drought support and education work and I hope this service will continue to benefit the next generation of farmers.”

**Media contact: Lyndall Hilder 0400 462 447**