

Press Release 29th March 2007

Gippsland Tourism Really is Back on Track

Mr Chris Buckingham, Convenor of the Gippsland Tourism Response and Recovery Group warmly welcomed today's announcements by the State Labour Government: 'The response to these fires has been a fantastic effort by business, community and government.'

He added: 'We continue to be amazed and inspired by the way Victorians are supporting the recovery process and returning to Gippsland for their holidays.'

Many parts of Gippsland are reporting that they are now fully booked for Easter with some vacancies either side of the main public holidays. Increases in accommodation bookings on the back of a very successful March are being felt across the region.

Mr Buckingham observed: 'The industry has remained positive, united and resilient in the face of some incredible challenges. It has been encouraging to find that so many people from Melbourne are coming into Gippsland to share the Easter Long weekend with us'.

The Gippsland Lakes and Mallacoota are close to full, with Visitor Information centres struggling to find accommodation for people over the long weekend in some East Gippsland towns.

Mr John Munns, Manager East Gippsland's Visitor Centre said 'Lakes Entrance and surrounding towns are very heavily booked for Easter accommodation. We are expecting a busy Easter Break with the long range forecast expecting good weather, ideal for boating and especially fishing which has been outstanding of late'.

South Gippsland is looking forward to the Easter long weekend with a sense of optimism. Christine Legg, Manager of the Prom Country Visitor Information Centre reported 'We have a few vacancies left, and continue to receive a lot of phone calls requesting accommodation for the long weekend. Of course we would welcome any further bookings or enquiries over the next week.'

In West Gippsland bookings have been accruing daily. Angela Betheras from the Gippsland Gourmet Country Tourism Association said 'Across the board, many operators have reported their best March ever; this has been related to the great events throughout the Palate of Passions festival and the Inspired By Gippsland -

Celebration of Food and Wine. April is looking good for most operators, although we would welcome more guests with a few vacancies still available.'

Much more of Gippsland's High Country will be open for business this Easter Long Weekend, from Dargo to Walhalla, Mount Baw Baw, Buchan and Omeo. For more information on parks and tracks open please visit www.parkweb.vic.gov.au.

Mr Buckingham concluded 'The way the Gippsland region continues to work together with a sense of unity has been so encouraging to all involved.'

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www.gippslandtourism.net.au