

Press Release 15th January, 2007

Local Government offers Rate Relief for Bushfire Affected Operators

Baw Baw Shire, East Gippsland Shire, Latrobe City and Wellington Shire are offering rate relief to tourism operators directly affected by the bushfires.

Mr Chris Buckingham, Convenor of the Gippsland Tourism Response and Recovery Group welcomed the support: 'We appreciate the support of Local Government in the response and recovery process.'

Operators based in Baw Baw Shire, Latrobe City, Wellington Shire and East Gippsland Shire can apply for rate relief as part of their Local Governments' Financial Hardships Policies. Operators requiring support in paying rates are encouraged to contact:

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| Baw Baw Shire (John Court): | 5624 2475 |
| East Gippsland Shire: | 5153 9500 |
| Latrobe City (Jan Smith): | 1300 367 700 |
| Wellington Shire: | 1300 137 218 |

Mr Buckingham added: 'The response from Local Government in the region has been very positive, and it is great to be part of a unified and positive response to the bushfires.'

Mr Buckingham concluded: 'The tourism industry in Gippsland employs 4500 people and contributes \$600 million per annum in direct spending. This support will help tourism businesses in the region manage cash flow pressures.'

Media Representatives:

Please contact Chris Buckingham on 0429 869 638 for more information on the Gippsland Tourism Response and Recovery Process.

For specific comment from Local Government please contact

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| Baw Baw Shire | Rachel Millar | 5624 2411 |
| East Gippsland Shire | Mike Quist | 5153 9500 |
| Latrobe City | Jeremy Bein | 1300 367 700 |
| Wellington Shire | Mark Vitlin | 5142 3458 |

Chris Buckingham

Convenor, Gippsland Tourism Response & Recovery Group

General Manager, Gippsland Tourism

Chairperson, Destination Gippsland Inc

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www.destinationgippsland.com.au

For information on the Gippsland Tourism Response and Recovery Group and industry information please go to

www.gippslandtourism.net.au