

Press Release 22 February Gippsland Celebrates Inspirational Food and Wine

Gippsland food and wine producers have united to entice locals and visitors with the 'Inspired By Gippsland – Celebration of Food and Wine'

The three-week celebration begins with the inaugural '*Inspired by Gippsland*' Degustation Dinner at Carinos, Leongatha on Friday 2nd March and will finish on 18th March with the Feast on East Harvest Picnic at Nicholson River Winery.

Mr Buckingham said: "Gippslanders are a passionate bunch and we take our food and wine very seriously. We also know how to have a good time".

The program features Prom Country Celebrations in South Gippsland over the first weekend, Harvest of Gippsland in West Gippsland over the Labour Day weekend and Feast on East from the 16th- 18th March.

Two of the world's longest lunches will be running in Noojee and Sale and Palate of Passions will be running throughout the celebrations.

Christian Stefani from Prom Country Celebrations said: 'We all have something to celebrate in March. This time it is Gippsland's great food and wine that brings us together at the table.'

He continued: 'We want people to come and join us in South Gippsland and celebrate the good things in life: sun, surf, soil and our spirit.'

Celebrations in West Gippsland are centred on the renowned Harvest of Gippsland at Lardner Park, where thousand of locals and Melbournians come together to celebrate regional produce.

Mr Mark Cockerell from Lardner Park observed: 'We have invited the best food and wine producers from across Gippsland, to come and share the fruits of their labour with thousands of people from across Victoria.'

Ms Jo Moulton of Feast on East said: 'What better way to let people know what Gippsland has to offer than to have a party that celebrates our diversity, our quality food and wine and link them

with our amazing nature-based experiences that have stood the test of time?’

The ‘Inspired By Gippsland – Celebration of Food and Wine’ is funded by participating organisations and the State Government through Tourism Victoria and the Bushfire Recovery Program. People can support the tourism recovery by inviting friends and family to Gippsland to join in the celebrations.

Mr Buckingham said: ‘This cluster of events is another great example of business, community and government working together. We have been through a very challenging time and it is time to celebrate the fact that the fires are contained and we can start to rebuild.’

He concluded: ‘March is a time of change; a time for inspiration, when we can all get out and celebrate the good things in life. It is a time to acknowledge our neighbours, celebrate our wins, take stock and look forward to the next steps.’

People interested in getting out in their own backyard and joining in the celebrations can go to www.inspiredbygippsland.com.au for more information

Media representatives: For more information please call Chris Buckingham on 0429 869 638

Attached is a full program that provides details of specific events throughout the celebrations. Media representatives are welcome to contact individual event organisers to find out more.

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Chris Buckingham
Convenor, Gippsland Tourism Response & Recovery Group
General Manager, Gippsland Tourism
Chairperson, Destination Gippsland Inc
0429 869 638

www.destinationgippsland.com.au

For information on the Gippsland Tourism Response and Recovery Group and industry information please go to www.gippslandtourism.net.au