

Press Release – 20 February

Gippsland Tourism Industry Leadership Program Takes Off

23 tourism operators from across Gippsland will be inducted into the inaugural Gippsland Tourism Industry Leadership Program in Sale this Thursday.

Chairperson, Gippsland Tourism Industry Leadership Program Ms Janiene Ayre said: 'The Gippsland Tourism Industry Leadership Program is the first of its type in Australia. It has been funded with support from the State Government through the Provincial Victoria Growth Fund Regional Leadership Initiative Program and significant corporate sponsorship from Telstra Country Wide, Gippsland Tourism and the tourism industry.'

The Program is auspiced by Baw Baw Shire Council on behalf of the Gippsland Local Government Network.

Ms Ayre continued: 'The Program is designed to help develop 23 operators with vision, passion and drive to provide ongoing leadership for the industry in the region.'

The participants come from across the region and represent accommodation, destination attractions & accommodation, adventure tourism, the wine industry, the food & restaurant industry, the racing industry, the tourism & consultancy sector and the entertainment industry.

Mr Chris Buckingham General Manager Gippsland Tourism said: 'The tourism sector in Gippsland has generated considerable momentum over the past 12 - 18 months. One of the key strategies is the formation of a sustainable platform for the industry.'

The program has 10 full-day workshop/seminars including a mid-year reflection and review, and a two day residential.

Each program day will be run in different locations throughout the Gippsland and have distinct themes. For example: Nature-based tourism, Food and Wine, Industry Development, Information and Communications Technology, Marketing and Media and Governance.

This group of leaders will play an important role in the formation of a peak regional tourism body later in the year.

Participants:

Andrew Gromotka, Leongatha
Andrew Pomeroy, Bairnsdale
Annetta Paterson, Kooyong
Ben Foster, Traralgon
Bronwen Osborn, Yanakie
Cheryl Lamb, Leongatha
Dale Calnin, Buchan
Damian Waters, Metung
Emma Harry, Leongatha
Graeme Baxter, Tidal River
Grant Soosalu, Loch Sport
Janine Hayes, Churchill
Julie Strang, Traralgon
Kay Munro, Bairnsdale
Ken Eckersley, Nicholson
Kerry Giles, Leongatha
Maree Wallace, Drouin
Melinda Wilson, Traralgon
Michael Leaney, Walhalla
Peter McMahon, Maffra
Phillipa Beeson, Neerim South
Rick Stockdale, Drouin East
Rowena Cann, Brandy Creek

Media representatives: Please contact Janiene Ayre, Chairperson of Gippsland Tourism Industry Leadership Program on 03 5624 2538 for more information, or contact details for individual participants.

Representatives are welcome to attend the launch being held at Bis Cucina at the Esso BHP Billiton Wellington Entertainment Centre at 100 Foster St Sale on Thursday 22 February 2007 at 4.30pm.