

**Media Release – Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2006**

## **Telstra Country Wide invests in local Tourism Leaders**

Telstra Country Wide has committed \$10,000 to the Gippsland Tourism Industry Leadership Program as a part of its commitment to one of the region's growth sectors.

Ms Jane Oakley General Manager Telstra Country Wide said: 'The Gippsland Tourism Industry Leadership Program is the first of its type in Australia. It has been funded with support from Telstra Country Wide, Gippsland Tourism, the industry and State Government.'

The Gippsland Tourism Industry Leadership Program is designed to help develop people with vision, passion and drive to provide ongoing leadership for the industry.

Mr Glenn Patterson CEO, Baw Baw Shire which is auspicing the GTILP on behalf of the Gippsland Local Government Network said: 'We are delighted to have Telstra's support. Their contribution will make a real difference to the program.'

Up to 25 Tourism Operators from across the Gippsland region will participate in the program in 2007. Each program day will be run in different locations throughout Gippsland and have distinct themes including: Nature-based tourism, Food and Wine, Industry Development, Information and Communications Technology, Marketing and Governance.

Mr Ian Maxfield, member for Narracan said: 'It is terrific to see Local and State Governments working together with one of our major corporate citizens and small business to support the development of the tourism industry.'

Ms Oakley observed: 'Telstra have a critical interest in supporting innovation and entrepreneurship in Gippsland. The GTILP is the first of its type in Australia and we are excited to be involved.'

The Gippsland Tourism Industry Leadership Program will be delivered by I-Gain Quality Learning using the highly regarded Gippsland Community Leadership Program Framework.

Well known restaurateur and graduate of the GCLP Mr David Cann from Warragul said: 'This program has the potential to really make a substantial difference to the industry over the long term. With the renewed interest in Tourism across the region, it is great to see a strategic approach being adopted.'

He continued: 'Participating in the GCLP changed the way I approached my business and my community. The Gippsland Tourism Industry Leadership Program will be of benefit to the industry.'

The program will focus on the following core activities:

- Developing the principles of collective leadership in the tourism industry
- Coaching and mentoring delivered by industry leaders
- Providing practical learning opportunities for industry leaders
- Supporting Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Leadership
- Promoting Industry Best Practice
- Encouraging regional understanding, co-operation and partnerships between industry and government.

Ms Jenny Hammett CEO, i-Gain Quality Learning said: 'Selection for the program will be merit based. If you are a member of the Tourism Industry and have an interest in the future of the tourism sector in Gippsland we encourage you to express interest in this program.'

People can find out more about the program by contacting the Gippsland Tourism Industry Leadership Program on 5135 4304 or email [gtilp@igain.vic.edu.au](mailto:gtilp@igain.vic.edu.au)

**Media representatives:** A special briefing and photo opportunity will be held at the Gippsland Heritage Park Moe from 9.00 – 9.40am this morning.

For more information, or to make contact with any of the quoted parties, please call Chris Buckingham, General Manager, Gippsland Tourism on 0429 869 638