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MEDIA RELEASE

VISITATION TO THE HEART OF VICTORIA CONTINUES TO GROW

The Heart of Victoria has continued to experience strong growth in visitors in the year to 30 September, the latest results of the National Visitor Survey have revealed, demonstrating that Victorian's and interstate visitors are continuing to "Plan. Explore. Discover." the wealth of experiences the region has to offer.

Goulburn River Valley Tourism welcomes the latest results, which showed over 3.2 million visitors came to the region, an increase of more than 20% on last year's visitation. These visitors spent around \$435 million in the local economy while they were here. This paints a very positive picture compared to 2012 when the region welcomed just under 2.7 million visitors.

Domestic visitation performed strongly with more than 17% growth in daytrip visitors (up to 2.2 million) and a 35% growth in overnight visitors (983 thousand Australians spent more than 2.1 million nights in the region). Compared to the same period last year, on average domestic overnight visitors opened their wallets and spent 38% more per visit which is great news for our local operators.

Speaking about our domestic visitation, Goulburn River Valley Tourism Chair Annie Fletcher-Nicholls said "we recognise that 'visiting friends and relatives' is still a very strong motivator for travel to the Heart of Victoria with almost 31% of domestic daytrip visitors and over 35% of domestic overnight visitors in this category.

Ms Fletcher-Nicholls continued to say, "our current television and radio campaign which is airing across the region is designed to capitalise on the VFR market and remind locals to share the amazing attractions and experiences found in their backyard with their visitors".

International tourists stayed more than 540 thousand nights in the region over the past 12 months. While this is down from last year, it still represents the second-best year since statistics commenced for the region in 2010. Over the last five years international visitation to the Heart of Victoria has seen an average annual growth of 8.3%.

At a national level, domestic overnight visitation by interstate travellers (non-Victorians) rose by 27.4% on last year's figures. Goulburn River Valley Tourism Executive Officer Leanne Hulm attributed this to both the great work that Visit Victoria has been doing in promoting the state as well as Goulburn River Valley Tourism's efforts in positioning the Heart of Victoria as a destination of choice.

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