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MEDIA RELEASE

GRVT DISAPPOINTED TO BE WINDING UP

Goulburn River Valley Tourism (GRVT) has been left with little choice but to windup its operations at the end of the financial year following decisions by its four member councils not to continue funding its operations.

The board's decision was also made in light of the State Government's announcement of a tourism review throughout Victoria and an anticipated re shuffle of tourism regions.

GRVT Chair, Annie Fletcher-Nicholls said "The Heart of Victoria has so much to be proud of in the tourism space - amazing natural attractions, an award winning food and wine industry, remarkable and passionate operators and so much more.

"It's deeply disappointing that despite celebrating the great work that we have done to grow the visitor economy by over \$200M in the last five years our four member councils have opted to part ways."

"GRVT was built on the concept of an alliance to support the tourism operators and industry, and without that alliance not only has GRVT been left in an untenable position, but I fear the tourism industry will need to look for new ways to market themselves, to develop their product and to get in front of regional and state decision makers." continued Ms Fletcher-Nicholls.

GRVT thanks the tourism industry, and the many individuals and organisations who have supported the growth of the region over the last eight years and seeks to keep the industry informed over coming weeks.

In the last 12 months the Goulburn River Valley region, welcomed over 3.3 million visitors. This included an increase of 23% in domestic visitation over the previous year, and a 17% lift in international visitation at a time when the rest of Victoria weakened by ~1.4%.

Formally established in March 2011, Goulburn River Valley Tourism has been the regional tourism organisation for the Heart of Victoria for the past eight years.

Originally established as a result of the United Approach to Tourism Report (2009) that aimed to deal with the lack of tourism representation in the region, GRVT committed to supporting the marketing, development, networking and advocacy of the \$781M tourism industry across the municipalities of Greater Shepparton City Council, Mitchell, Murrindindi and Strathbogie Shire Councils.

.[360 words]

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