

ANNUAL REPORT

2016 - 2017



THE **HEART** OF VICTORIA



Goulburn River Valley

CHAIR'S REPORT

Goulburn River Valley Tourism was officially formed by its four member Councils – Greater Shepparton City Council, Mitchell Shire, Murrindindi Shire and Strathbogie Shire in 2011. The board and the Goulburn River Valley Tourism team continue to work closely with these councils towards the common goal of growing the visitor economy.

We are focused on building and promoting tourism in the region. This is exciting because the Heart of Victoria provides unique experiences for visitors across a broad spectrum of interests, some still to be discovered by visitors and locals.

We have a wealth of military history, sporting events, premium food and wine, aboriginal art and trails, outdoor adventure including hiking and boating. All of these experiences are bringing increased numbers to the Heart of Victoria, and through close collaboration with our member Councils and stakeholders Goulburn River Valley Tourism will continue to build a solid tourism platform for the region.

Over the past year, the Goulburn River Valley Tourism team have worked hard on capturing a greater share of the tourism market out of Melbourne. With such a wonderful array of offerings we are keen to push our way into the corporate sector of the Melbourne tourism industry.

Our offer in the agritourism and indigenous tourism space are key draw cards for local, national and international visitors. Our aim in the coming years is to ensure we are clearly on their radar.

We have an exciting new promotions campaign underway which will be a key focus for this organisation in the coming year.

As part of our strategic plan for the next three years, we remain committed to marketing the Heart of Victoria brand as well as adding value to the work of our stakeholders.

Our two biggest challenges remain the lack of government funding and recognition as a Regional Tourism Board. However, we have received great support from our local Members of Parliament, both State and Federal and we were able to put our case to the Minister for Tourism when we recently welcomed him to the Heart of Victoria. Our lobbying efforts will continue.

I was honoured to take over the role as Chair from the Hon. Fran Bailey who had served for three

years as a wonderful advocate for the region. Working alongside her was Wendy Jones, who stepped down from the role as CEO in the middle of the year.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank both Fran and Wendy for their commitment, dedication and tireless work for Goulburn River Valley Tourism.

With our new Executive Officer, Leanne Hulm in place, we are looking forward to building on the work of our predecessors and delivering real and tangible value to the region in the coming year.

Annie Fletcher-Nicholls
Chair



EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The 2016-2017 year has been a busy one for Goulburn River Valley Tourism as we continue to build for the future of this wonderful region – the Heart of Victoria.

Goulburn River Valley Tourism rests on the shoulders of a small and hardworking team in conjunction with the Board of Directors. There have been significant changes in the last twelve months, however, our future for the organisation is looking strong with the recent appointment of new Chair, Annie Fletcher-Nicholls and Executive Officer, Leanne Hulm. Annie brings a wealth of experience to the role, including as an Independent Director of Goulburn River Valley Tourism. Leanne commenced as Executive Officer in June and previously held the position of General Manager of Southern Cross Austereo. She was also recently President of Shepparton Chamber of Commerce.

I would like to acknowledge our Tourism Officer Caolan O'Connor, who has now been with the organisation since 2014

and has proven to be an outstanding asset to the organisation not only in the digital space but more generally with his work with our stakeholders across the region.

In 2016 we proudly launched our new Visit Heart of Victoria branding, with thanks to best design to life for their efforts in the concept design. We have seen this branding featured on our new consumer website, www.heartofvictoria.com.au, and our refreshed industry website, www.goulburnrivervalley.com.au.

Most importantly you will see the brand represented fully in our fourth edition of the Discover the Heart of Victoria Planner (previously the Holiday Planner) launched in early 2017. This edition has been incredibly well received in the market, and we were pleased to feature Eildon as a stand-alone destination for the first time.

In August 2016, we proudly partnered with Victoria Tourism Industry Council and Greater Shepparton City Council in

hosting the Information Centre Summit welcoming over 140 Council and Visitor Information Centre staff from across Victoria to the region.

Since our formal establishment in March 2011, we have gained growing respect from the myriad of stakeholders that we work with for the passionate and professional way that we approach the task of growing the visitor economy in the Heart of Victoria. We have been delighted to be involved in steering the Hume Aboriginal Cultural Trail, the Hume Agritourism Project and the Fraser Visitor Experience Planning projects – each game-changers for our region.

Our communication with industry, visitors and other stakeholders, continues to mature and prosper through developing relationships with Murray Regional Tourism, Tourism North East, Regional Development Victoria, Victoria Tourism Industry Council and Visit Victoria.

Cont'd



EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Of note we want to celebrate the establishment of the Goulburn Regional Partnership which covers the municipalities of Greater Shepparton, Mitchell, Murrindindi, Strathbogie and Moira. It's heartening to see that government recognises how well these councils work together in developing the visitor economy.

We recognise the importance of understanding our visitor economy to enable us to make better strategic decisions for the prosperity and vitality of the region. As such we are excited to have recommissioned quarterly visitation statistics for the region and for our four municipalities. We're happy to report that the Goulburn River Valley Tourism Destination Management Plan, the 'blueprint' for investment and development of tourism across the Heart of Victoria, will indeed receive an overdue update in the coming year.

It has been a good year for Goulburn River Valley Tourism and we thank previous Chair, Hon Fran Bailey and Executive Officer, Wendy Jones for their contributions to the organisation and region. I have confidence that in reading our annual report you will appreciate that both Fran and Wendy have left a solid foundation in which to continue our work. We thank our industry and our member Councils for their confidence and support.

Leanne Hulm

Executive Officer



FINANCIAL REPORT

The Financial Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2017 shows Goulburn River Valley Tourism to have made a surplus of \$33,717 against a loss of \$54,407 in the previous year. As with every year care needs to be taken in interpreting the results of our financials.

Total equity of \$136,518 (against \$102,801 in 2016) is still healthy going forward when taking into consideration projected income and the forecast spend through the year. Importantly it meets and indeed exceeds the Operating Surplus Policy set in June 2016 in line with the Board's appetite for risk.

Our healthy surplus in 2016 provides Goulburn River Valley Tourism with the opportunity to invest heavily in our marketing efforts in the coming year. In fact the Board have been able to allocate over \$60,000 of reserves to the 2017-2018 budget to spend directly on marketing the Heart of Victoria.

The Financial Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2017 can be downloaded from:

www.goulburnrivervalley.com.au/annual-reports



2016 - 2017 HIGHLIGHTS

The year has been a busy one for Goulburn River Valley Tourism. Just some of the many activities we have been involved in are highlighted below:

Marketing

- Formally launched consumer digital platform – www.heartofvictoria.com.au
- Featured as a stand-alone region in the 2016 Experience Culture Guide
- Published and launched our fourth Discover the Heart of Victoria Planner. Of note, we featured Eildon as a stand-alone destination within the Planner, taking out 5 pages.
- Hosted visiting journalists from publications including Lonely Planet Guide, and Huffington Post.

Industry Development

- Tourism Awards mentoring – The Churches, Shepparton Motor Museum
- GOTAFE ran 55 volunteers through Cert III in Tourism
- Recommended Visitation Statistics
- Partnered with stakeholders including RDV, RDA, Murray Regional Tourism, North East Tourism, Parks Victoria and others on Hume Aboriginal Tourism, Agritourism and Fraser National Park development projects

Engagement & Co-operation

- Annual Dinner – Hon John Pandazopoulos - Chair of the Victorian Visitor, Economy Ministerial Advisory Committee
- VIC Summit hosted in Greater Shepparton
- GRVT Roadshow delivered range of workshops in partnership with Murrindindi Inc
- Mentored Casey and Cardinia Shire Councils regarding regional tourism



2016 - 2017 HIGHLIGHTS

Advocacy

- Goulburn Regional Assembly
- Attended MP4s Tourism
- Hosted Chris White, Regional Manager Visit Victoria at Board Planning Day
- Supported multiple funding submissions to Regional Events Fund, Regional Development Victoria, Visit Victoria and other funding streams.

Governance

- Achieved 100% adherence to financial and legal responsibilities of the Company.
- Secured new Chair, appointed replacement Directors due to end of term, and recruited new Executive Officer.





OUR TEAM

The small team at Goulburn River Valley Tourism has seen some change this year. We welcomed Leanne Hulm as our new Executive Officer, and said farewell to Wendy Jones who has served with Goulburn River Valley Tourism since its inception as an independent Director and later the Executive Officer. We also hosted, Ryley Heap, our second intern under the Victorian Chamber Internship Program.

Wendy Jones Executive Officer
July 2013 to June 2017
Leanne Hulm Executive Officer
June 2017 to Current

Caolan O'Connor Tourism Officer
February 2014 to Current

Ryley Heap Tourism Intern
March 2017 to May 2017

Anthony Pearson Public Officer
MB+M Chartered Accountants Shepparton
March 2011 to Current



**LEANNE
HULM**



**CAOLAN
O'CONNOR**



**RYLEY
HEAP**





OUR BOARD

CURRENT AT JUNE 30 2017



**ANNIE
FLETCHER-
NICHOLLS**
CHAIR

Annie is an experienced company director, serving on the boards of government businesses, not-for-profit organisations and private SMEs.

She is currently a Director of Docklands Studios Melbourne and is Chair of Seymour Health. Her professional career saw her working at the highest level of corporate communications. As Managing Director of one of Australia's largest public relations companies, owned by Clemenger Advertising, she led a team of practitioners who provided advice to many of Australia's leading corporations and public entities.

This in-depth understanding of strategic communications and marketing brings an important perspective to a board in an era where an organisation's public profile is monitored by instant communications and a 24/7 news cycle.

Annie holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from ANU and is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



**CHERYL
HAMMER**

Cheryl Hammer is a proactive and long-time tourism operator in Greater Shepparton. She has owned her current business, The Churches Accommodation in Orrvale, for 10 years.

Cheryl is also well known throughout the community for her media and marketing work with a range of businesses, including Emerald Bank Leisure Land, the site for the filming of the Australian movie, Spin Out. Cheryl has a background in community engagement, journalism, marketing and event management and was the CEO of not-for-profit organisation The Community Fund Goulburn Valley.

Cheryl served on the board of Tourism Greater Shepparton for more than a decade and has been on the board of Goulburn River Valley Tourism since December 2014.

She brings a wealth of industry and community experience and contacts to the Board.



**CR JACKIE
ASHE**

Cr Jackie Ashe moved to the Shire in 2002 and has been actively involved in the community ever since. Her background is hospitality and tourism and she has volunteered on a number of community associations and event committees. These include Murrindindi Food and Wine Inc, World's Longest Lunch in Marysville, Cittaslow Yea, Grow Food Network and the Community Garden Project.

Cr Ashe and her husband live on a farm where they operate a farm store and restaurant. She also works with local education and training institutes including The Outdoor Education Group (2010-2014), Holmesglen and CEACA. Cr Ashe has a Diploma in Hospitality Management, Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and an Advanced Permaculture Design Certificate.

Cr Ashe was elected to Murrindindi Council in November 2016.



**GERALDINE
CHRISTOU**

Geraldine Christou has been Manager Investment Attraction (now retitled Manager Economic Development) since 2010, following eight years in the Governance department of Council and roles in the private manufacturing sector. Geraldine's portfolios include tourism, events, business and industry attraction and development, business incubation, grants, international relations and visitor experience.

Geraldine has a Bachelor of Business, an associate certificate of applied management, and Prince2 project management. Geraldine is also involved with Industry and Employment Ministerial Taskforce, La Trobe University Regional Advisory Board, Shepparton Chamber of Commerce and Industry, GV Link and Shepparton Show Me. Geraldine was appointed to the Board in August 2014.



**ALAN
ARTHUR**

Alan is a senior executive, with a technology background, currently in the role of GM Corporate Services for Goulburn-Murray Water. He is also the founder and Executive Director of Tech2Kids, a charity committed to getting technology into the hands of disadvantaged children.

With most of his career spent in tourism and hospitality, Alan has worked in Australia and internationally, and been part of the senior executive for a variety of organisations from small local businesses through to global enterprises. His tourism experience includes bars, hotels, treetop walks, ski resorts, aquariums, island resorts and theme parks.

With his background, Alan appreciates the importance of using technology to attract and retain visitors, and to complement and enhance the visitor experience.

Alan lives in Kialla with his wife Kirsten, and two young children, Hannah and Hamish.



**BRUCE
MINCHINTON**

Born and raised in Shepparton, Bruce, holds degrees in Wine Marketing and Masters of Business Administration. His working life, spanning some 30 years, has centred on Direct to Consumer marketing in the cinema, wine and dating industries in Australia and Canada. Currently he is the Wine Club and Cellar Door Operation Manager at Tahbilk Pty Ltd, Nagambie and a committee member of Nagambie Lakes Tourism and Commerce Inc.

Heading up the tourism activities at Tahbilk, Bruce's belief is that collectively a region can be much more effective in attracting visitors than a single business and hence his interest in being on regional tourism boards.



**KELLIE
VISE**

Kellie is an experienced senior leader, specialising in customer experience, stakeholder engagement and business transformation. She has over 15 years of leadership experience across a range of sectors including utilities, tertiary and indigenous education and local government.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts and Graduate Diplomas in Education and Business and is a fellow of the Fairley Community Leadership Program. She has lived in the Goulburn Valley most of her life and has a passion for supporting and developing sustainable regional and rural communities.

Kellie is currently the Manager of Active Communities at Mitchell Shire Council overseeing a range of portfolios including leisure services, recreation and open spaces, customer and library services, economic development, arts, culture and tourism.



**JANELLE
TOOMEY**

Janelle Toomey has worked in both agency and client roles during her career as an accomplished business, brand and product developer.

As Business Director at Best. Design to Life a Melbourne based company who operate in the built brand, design and brand space - creating new integrated brand solutions for brands and immersive experiences for consumers in retail and hospitality.

Janelle is also the co-owner and operator of renowned Bank Street Pizza in Avenel, which she started with her husband five years ago and has become one of Victoria's loved regional food destinations.

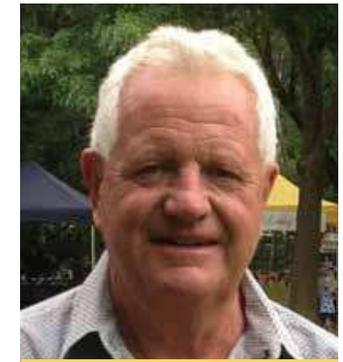


**JOHN
KEEFE**

With a background in law, data processing and the motor industry, John spent most of his working life at the Confederation of Australian Motor Sport, where from 1973 until 1993 he was the Chief Executive.

Following retirement John moved to Seymour in 1998 and commenced his consultancy from home. Here, he started a new career which was to last nearly 15 years with Seymour Coaches and which led to other work in the passenger transport industry.

John is a member of the Rotary Club of Seymour and is currently the President of Seymour Business and Tourism.



**ANDREW
EMBLING**

Andrew is the owner of Landmark Embling Stock and Station agents and rural merchandise in Alexandra. Born in Alexandra, Andrew spent 18 years working with businesses across the Goulburn Valley before returning to the Murrindindi Shire 20 years ago.

Andrew is active in the Murrindindi Shire as President of the Alexandra Traders and Tourism Association, Board Member of Murrindindi Inc, Board Member of Kellock Lodge and a council member of Rubicon Outdoor Centre. With a passion for regional events Andrew also sits on the Board of Alexandra Events Inc, a committee responsible for the Truck Show, Eildon Big Fish Challenge and many smaller events in the region. In 2008 Andrew was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for Services to the Community, a community which he is deeply passionate and proud to be a part of.

ABOUT THE GOULBURN RIVER VALLEY REGION

The Heart of Victoria is filled with rolling hills, lush forests, majestic waterways, rural plains and of course the mighty Goulburn River – the lifeblood of the region.

Easy access for a day trip or delightful for an extended stay, choices are plentiful in the Goulburn River Valley.

The region abounds with culture, intrigue, history, charm, individuality and the best what nature has to offer. You can't go past Lake Eildon, Lake Mountain and Lake Nagambie and that's just for starters!

Fantastic events, superb local produce, great wine, fabulous markets and the Great Victorian Rail Trail are all part of the mix.

Destinations such as Marysville, Kinglake Ranges, Alexandra, Eildon & Yea; Seymour, Kilmore Tallarook, Tooborac & Broadford; Euroa, Nagambie, Strathbogie & Ruffy; and Shepparton, Mooroopna, Murchison, Dookie & Tatura offer something for everyone.

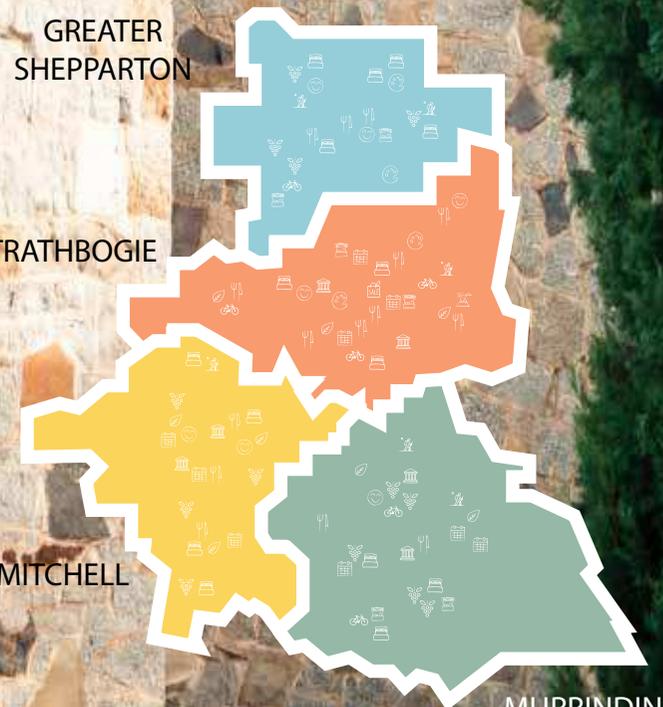
It's easy to love the Heart of Victoria.

GREATER SHEPPARTON

STRATHBOGIE

MITCHELL

MURRINDINDI





THE **HEART** OF VICTORIA

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Goulburn River Valley