

Tuesday 10 January 2017

## **GOULBURN RIVER VALLEY TOURISM APPOINTS NEW CHAIR**

Goulburn River Valley Tourism has announced the appointment of Mr Frank Whitford as its new Independent Chair commencing on 1 February 2017.

Mr Whitford has an outstanding background in management and marketing in the retail sector as well as extensive knowledge of Australian agri-business through his involvement with a family wagyu beef breeding and calf rearing business near Shepparton.

He has served on boards over a period of ten years both as an Executive Board Member and a Non - Executive Board Member and is currently Deputy Chair of PrimeSafe – the meat, poultry and fish regulator for the State of Victoria.

Mr Whitford's previous roles include Board Member and Deputy Chair of both Goulburn Murray Water and the Australian Wagyu Association and he is a past Board Member of the Goulburn Broken Management Authority.

"I am delighted to be joining the Board at Goulburn River Valley Tourism and very much looking forward to the opportunity to promote the development of tourism in the Heart of Victoria" Mr Whitford said.

"The Goulburn River Valley is a region that I am very familiar with and feel that I can add real value to the Board and the region not just through my experience as a Director but as a passionate believer in the value of the tourism industry" he added.

Speaking of the appointment, outgoing Chair Hon. Fran Bailey said "Goulburn River Valley Tourism conducted a thorough and extensive search for a new Independent Chair and we are delighted that Frank has agreed to join the Board and I am personally confident we have made an excellent appointment".

"Frank is joining the Board at an important phase in the development of the Goulburn River Valley region and his experience and relationships with the broader stakeholder community will be a great asset not just for the Board but for the tourism industry as a whole." Ms Bailey added.

Ms Bailey, a former Federal Minister for Tourism and Member for McEwan has served as the Chair of the Board for the past three years during which time she has overseen numerous initiatives including the release of the Goulburn River Valley Destination Management Plan, the development of the Heart of Victoria branding and the launch of the region's digital marketing platform.

Mr Whitford joins three independent skills directors and eight skills based and representative directors from member Councils - City of Greater Shepparton and the Shires of Strathbogie, Mitchell and Murrindindi - on the Board of Goulburn River Valley Tourism that is charged with the development, marketing and advocacy of tourism throughout the region.

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