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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA RELEASE

\$27 Million Tourism Package supports regional tourism industry growth

The Victoria's Tourism industry welcomes the announcement of a significant package to support regional tourism in Victoria as part of the State Government's Provincial Victoria Statement.

Released by the Premier, Steve Bracks, and the Minister for State and Regional Development, John Brumby yesterday the package identifies a number of funding initiatives which will provide opportunities for tourism businesses to expand and develop new products as well as promote regional Victoria to the interstate market.

Nicholas Hunt, Chief Executive of Tourism Alliance Victoria said he was delighted at the funding announcement stating "this funding support will provide a boost to the marketing of regional Victoria and offer opportunities for infrastructure development which will support continued growth in regional tourism".

"This package recognises that regional tourism is a significant and integrated part of Victoria's regional economy. Tourism in regional Victoria is worth \$3.3 billion, up 27% in the last five years, and employs 61,000 Victorians."

"Small businesses offering a diversity of quality customer experiences from food and wine to nature and adventure are one of the keys to Victoria's regional tourism success. This mix of initiatives can offer opportunities to support business growth."

"Domestic tourism is a major component of regional tourism activity. Ensuring Victoria maintains a strong presence in our domestic markets is critical. The combination of supply and demand oriented initiatives within the package is very positive" Mr Hunt said.

The package includes elements to boost recreational fishing, walk and cycle track infrastructure which is further recognition that tourism activity can deliver both economic, social and cultural benefits to communities.

The tourism package includes:

- \$11 million for marketing regional Victoria to interstate tourists; support the development of new tourism products particularly in the areas of food and wine tourism; and renew and replace tourism signage.
- \$3.2 million boost for recreation fishing and tourism projects.
- \$1.7 million to examine tourism in Victorian forests by establishing a new Ecotourism Taskforce
- \$100,000 for a Victorian Goldfields Heritage study, looking at the economic contribution of the Victorian Goldfields regions and the potential benefits of a World Heritage Area listing.
- \$3.1 million for the development of the Falls Creek All Seasons Gateway project to help attract visitors year round and upgrade arrival and gateway infrastructure.

The industry looks forward to the release of further detail on the packages and being involved appropriately with these projects as they are developed.

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