



SPRING/SUMMER 2010 EDITION

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

PAUL ALBONE

*Welcome to the Spring/Summer Edition of the Murrindindi Mitchell Bushfire Tourism Recovery Group Industry Newsletter. This quarterly update is designed to share tourism news on the rebuilding process with our industry colleagues and friends.*

*It has been a busy couple of months for the Bushfire Recovery Group with the launch of the Official Visitor Guide, Official Visitor Maps and the Calendar of Events, and the successful execution of the inaugural BIGFISH competition.*

*We are looking forward to an action-packed summer, with water levels constantly rising in Lake Eildon, plenty of events to draw people to the region and the recent announcement of \$1.7 million dollars of funding to continue the tourism recovery efforts.*

*Make sure to visit the Watch Us Grow website to view the innovative regional Online Touring Application that has recently gone live and to keep up-to-date with our recovery efforts and all the action happening across the region this summer.*

### (1) THE BIGFISH COMPETITION

The BIGFISH Competition made a major splash nationwide in October, with the successful launch at the Alexandra BIGFISH Market Day and a large number of participants fishing in both the Goulburn River and Lake Eildon throughout the 16 days of competition.

One of the tagged fish was caught; 17 year old Alexandra local Ron Clarke (pictured) caught a tagged fish in the Goulburn River on the first weekend of the competition and was awarded a cheque for \$50,000.

The BIGFISH website received more than 57,000 hits and participant survey results show 66% of participants stayed over night in the region, while approximately 30% were fishing in Lake Eildon or the Goulburn River for the first time.

Expenditure in the region across the 16 days of competition is estimated at more than \$1 million plus. Despite the challenges of recent flooding, less than excitable weather, and having to compete with the AFL Grand Final replay, this was a great injection of cash into regional Victorian communities.

The BIGFISH event and the region received fantastic publicity during September and October with \$148,950.00 of advertising value generated and \$446,850.00 of true public relations value, including coverage in print media, radio and online. The BIGFISH team also secured \$100,500.00 of added-value advertising and promotion from media partners, 3AW and the Herald Sun.

The Murrindindi Mitchell Bushfire Tourism Recovery Group put the event together with a budget of \$90,000, which was spent on insuring the tagged fish, event management, marketing collateral and public relations. The Bushfire Recovery

Group would like to thank Fisheries Victoria, Goulburn Murray Water, Parks Victoria and participating community groups and business for their generous help in running the event. We would also like to thank Deb Langley for her excellent management support of the event.



### (2) MMBTRG IPHONE APPLICATION AND ONLINE TOURING APPLICATION

The Murrindindi Mitchell Bushfire Tourism Recovery Group (MMBTRG) is set to become leaders in the use of technology-driven tourism marketing, with the launch of a new Tourism iPhone Application and Online Touring Application.

These innovative applications will provide users with detailed maps and tourism product information for the bushfire affected Victorian regions of Mitchell and Murrindindi Shires.

The iPhone application and online touring function is expected to help local businesses with the tourism recovery process by connecting millions of iPhone and internet users both nationally and internationally with Murrindindi and Mitchell businesses and helping visitors plan their

holidays to the region. More than 100 local businesses and attractions are currently on the website.

The Tourism iPhone Application is now available to download for free from the iTunes App Store. The Online Touring Application is available at [www.watchusgrow.com.au](http://www.watchusgrow.com.au)

### (3) FUTURE BUSHFIRE TOURISM RECOVERY FUNDING

\$1.7 million dollars of new government funding has been secured for the continuation of tourism recovery in the bushfire affected region over a four year period beginning in January 2011.

The funding will be spent predominantly in the Marysville and Triangle area and will focus on event establishment, development and marketing.

A steering committee will be formed to guide the allocation of these funds, with Tourism Victoria administering the funding over the four year period.

### (4) OFFICIAL VISITOR GUIDE DIRECT MAIL OUT

The recently launched Lake Mountain, Lake Eildon and Upper Goulburn River Official Visitor Guide will have been sent via direct mail to a number of residences in Inner and Eastern suburbs of Melbourne to encourage Melbournians to visit the region this summer.

The mail out features a competition as an incentive for recipients to visit the region, with the options of entering the competition in Visitor Information Centres around the region or online at [www.watchusgrow.com.au](http://www.watchusgrow.com.au)

Tourism Minister Tim Holding MP launched the Official Visitor Guide in Narbethong on August 27, along with the Lake Mountain, Lake Eildon and Upper Goulburn River

Visitor Map, Yea and Kinglake Ranges

Visitor Map and the Mitchell Shire Calendar of Events.

The mail out is part of the distribution plan for the Official Visitor Guide which has already been distributed along with the Visitor Maps and Calendar of Events to Visitor Information Centres across Victoria and participating businesses.

### (5) COOPERATIVE MARKETING

#### Yarra Valley Spring/Summer Online Campaign

The Bushfire Recovery Group has partnered with Yarra Valley and the Dandenongs Marketing in their current Spring/Summer marketing campaign. MMBTRG offered a 50% subsidy for local fire-affected businesses to advertise in the campaign and have featured a Murrindindi page in the campaign which encourages visitors to the region for summer.

#### High Country Summer Campaign

The Bushfire Recovery Group will also be partnering with the High Country to offer local fire-affected businesses a 50% subsidy to participate in the upcoming High Country Summer campaign which includes advertising in the Herald Sun, The Age, Gourmet Traveller and Royal Auto magazine. Bushfire recovery editorial in this campaign will feature Lake Eildon, rising water levels in the river and lake, and the host of summer activities available in the region. Advertising space is still available for most of these campaigns. For further information, please contact Bronwyn Arandt on 03 5772 0324.

#### Goulburn River Valley Holiday Planner

Goulburn River Valley will soon be creating a regional Holiday Planner to compliment the existing Official Visitor Guides for the region. The Bushfire Recovery Group will be partnering with Goulburn River Valley to provide subsidies for businesses in Mitchell and Murrindindi to advertise in the Holiday Planner. Keep an eye out for this upcoming opportunity!

### (6) MEDIA RESULTS

Over the past few months the Bushfire Recovery Group has seen some fantastic media results for the region, including extensive coverage of the BIGFI\$H competition, a feature in the Sunday Herald Sun on the Heathcote Wine region, and a feature in The Age titled 'Beyond the Fires', both which resulted from media famil visits organised by the Bushfire Recovery Group.

### (7) UPCOMING SUPPORT

The MMBTRG is working with the Yarra Valley – High Country Touring Route Committee to determine how this can best be leveraged to assist fire affected businesses.

The MMBTRG is also working with Goulburn River Valley Tourism to transition the Watch Us Grow website to the new regional tourism board in 2011.