

# Media Release



**The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC**

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Regional Development

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Thursday, 18 May, 2017

## **NATURE-BASED TOURISM HUB CONNECTS GANNAWARRA TOWNS**

Towns in Gannawarra Shire will benefit from a new tourism hub to be developed in Koondrook thanks to a \$600,000 grant from the Andrews Labor Government.

When complete, the \$1.2 million Nature-Based Tourism Hub will connect iconic natural assets around Koondrook, Cohuna and Kerang, including the Gunbower State Forest, Murray River and Kerang Lakes.

The project will make significant contributions to Gannawarra's visitor economy and confirm the region's status as a nature-based destination.

Located on the banks of the Gunbower Creek, the Hub will feature authentic 'glamping' style tents, a camp kitchen, and canoe platform – all linked to cycling tracks, canoe trails, and the Kerang-Koondrook Rail Trail.

The project will also provide a footbridge over the Gunbower Creek that will provide visitors with access to the internal tracks and trails of the magnificent Gunbower State Forest.

The new hub will become an important component of the future Murray River Adventure Trail – a multisport adventure trail that will extend the length of the Murray River.

The Hub is expected to attract an additional 6,000 visitors to the region annually and increase visitor nights by 1,800 annually. Broader benefits as a result of the hub and the future Murray River Adventure Trail include an estimated output of \$12.8 million and more than 70 additional jobs.

It's expected to support a range of existing and new tourism initiatives such as a replica paddle steamer operating from Koondrook, paddle steamer trips by Echuca operators, kayak tours, and events.

As visitation to the area increases, new business opportunities will enable the establishment of new accommodation and services to meet the growing market.

The NBT Hub project is funded by the Labor Government's flagship *Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF)*, which is investing to develop iconic regional tourism projects that create world class tourism experiences and boost the regional economy.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development Jaala Pulford**

*"We want more people to enjoy our great outdoors and spend more time in regional Victoria because it has the best of everything."*

*"The combination of a tracks, trails and on-water activities present a wonderful opportunity to showcase the spectacular natural assets of the region and boost its visitor economy as a result."*

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Tourism and Major Events John Eren**

*"We're proud to back this project that's creating jobs and putting Koondrook and Gannawarra on the map as a nature-based destination of choice."*

**Media Contact:** Tom Whitty 0488 084 717 | Tom.Whitty@minstaff.vic.gov.au