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**Media Release:**

**Apricot Consulting scales up ESG and Social Procurement Capability appointing new Director ESG, Geoff Gourley.**

The appointment of recognised social entrepreneur, innovator and impact investor, Geoff Gourley, to the Director ESG role, will deliver a step-change in expertise and capability for the business nationally. Along with a team of 15, Geoff will lead all ESG, Social Value & Impact, NetZero and Social and Sustainable Procurement management consultancy activities.

Mr Gourley will also sit on the Executive Leadership Team with CEO James Natsis, Director of Leadership and Change, Lana Johnson, Head of Digital and Operations, Annie Leong, and Head of Partnerships, Ben Hellstrom.

Apricot Consulting Founder Derek Linsell said, “Our work has always centred on the principles of ESG. Some of our earliest work involved establishing social impact programs back in 2002. Geoff’s appointment is the culmination of this experience, accelerating the natural progression of this trajectory”

Apricot Consulting provides key services to leadership, change and ESG across a broad range of industries. Their model seeks to implement change that affects the health of leaders, teams, organisations, and the communities in which they operate.

“When it comes to ESG, we see a lot of companies focus on the strategy at exec level, and that’s where it remains. While have a long history of creating strategy, our passion as a business is in the implementation part of this; helping businesses lead ESG change. And we are really averse to just walking off once a strategy has been written – we want to be part of the journey here, and we get stuff done - that’s an unshakeable element of our DNA”, Ben Hellstrom – Head of Partnerships.

As the prominence of ESG as a commercial driver increases in nearly every industry, a concerted approach, creative solutions, and internal confluence is needed in greater measures to match the growing complexity of requirements, compliance, and excellence. This represents the shift from strategies that aid greenwashing, touch’n’go corporate giving and staff volunteer days; a shift towards measurable impact and real change.

Apricot has been working with a range of blue-chip clients including Aurecon, Transurban, John Holland Group, Kraft Heinz, R.M.Williams, APA and SA Water to name a few. Delivering a concise and tactical suite of services that help organisations identify and action next steps in ESG risk mitigation and realise high impact ESG and social procurement opportunities. A key of Apricot’s operating model is the modularity of services – which mean you don’t pay for what you don’t need; Services can be strung together or applied flexibly to suit specific need.

“At the centre of long-term commercial viability will be investment in ESG activity. ESG is no longer just about risk mitigation, but about the opportunity it presents. Businesses that thrive in the next decade will integrate ESG in all aspects of their business, and Apricot is well placed to help leaders navigate that change. Geoff’s appointment will enhance Apricot’s ability to add even more value to our client needs and support a transition to the future of business.” said James Natsis, Apricot CEO.

As a key service line over the past 3 years, Apricot’s work in social procurement has grown exponentially. The potential of social procurement is such that organisations with low profit and high revenue that traditionally would be barred from extravagant corporate giving programs, can have the same impact by integrating social value into their procurement activity. This concept has seen Apricot team up with the University of Melbourne to create basic training that addresses social procurement as a foundational topic.

“I am seeing a rapid increase in demand for Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) support and consultancy across a range of industry sectors. Boards and executive management teams are being influenced, in some cases pushed, by investors, stakeholders, employees and customers to have an ESG strategy, to measure their impact and baseline and set targets for improved performance and compliance.

I am excited to be taking up this executive leadership role with Apricot and to be at the forefront of working with clients and their supply chains to rapidly adapt to a changing business and operating environment.” Said Mr Gourley.

***About Geoff Gourley***

Geoff is a leading Global Social Innovator & Entrepreneur, Impact Investor and ESG champion, in 2017 he was acknowledged in the Top 100 Social Entrepreneurs & Innovators around the world. He is also Founder & Chairman of Impact Investment Fund, Chair of the Advisory Board at Swinburne University Innovation Precinct, and past Board Director of United Nations Association of Australia (Vic). He is passionate about supporting purpose-driven entrepreneurs and organisations to deliver positive impact and social value.

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***About Apricot Consulting***

Since it’s conception two decades ago, the Apricot team have delivered outcomes and strategies that quantify and improve the health of leaders, teams, organisations and communities. While our firm has changed significantly since it’s first project in 2002, our work has always endeavoured to meet the lofty goal of genuinely making the world a better place.

Our primary service lines sit within the area of Leadership and Change, and ESG. We see these divisions increasingly intertwined, and reflective of a shift towards a more ESG-minded economy. Our strength is our ability to connect leaders around a shared vision of success, and importantly, walk with our clients to implement and deliver influential programs driven from the top down and holistically informed by their unique business ecosystem, both internal and external. We deliver this through the synergy of our expert consultants and in-house and external tech, including our own home-grown algorithms, the unique Apricot Health Index ™ digital assessment, the integration of complex artificial intelligence, as well as a suite of partnerships with world leading institutions and organisations to ensure our client's commercial peace-of-mind and the knowledge that their work will leave a legacy.

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