

FEBRUARY 2023

# ALBURY WODONGA LOCAL AREA PLAN AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS



Destination  
Riverina Murray NSW



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters that surround the Murray River. We acknowledge and respect their history, culture and continuous connection to Country.

We pay our respects to elders – past, present and emerging who have cared for this Country for over 60,000 years.

This landscape, rich in story and opportunity, plays a pivotal part in our visitor economy and we thank Victoria and New South Wales' First Peoples for sharing this with us all.



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## ACRONYMS

DMP	Destination Management Plan
DN	Destination Networks
DRNSW	Department of Regional NSW
DRM	Destination Riverina Murray
GMW	Goulburn Murray Water
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
LAP	Local Area Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
MDBA	Murray-Darling Basin Authority
MRAT	Murray River Adventure Trail
MRT	Murray Regional Tourism
NPWS	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services
NVS	National Visitor Survey
PAW	Parklands Albury Wodonga
PTV	Public Transport Victoria
RDV	Regional Development Victoria
TRA	Tourism Research Australia
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<b>Daytrip Visitor</b>	Those who travel for a round trip distance of at least 50 kilometres, are away from home for at least 4 hours, and who do not spend a night away from home as part of their travel. Same day travel as part of overnight travel is excluded.
<b>Overnight Visitor</b>	People aged 15 years and over who undertake an overnight trip of one night or more and at least 40 kilometres away from home are referred to as overnight visitors. Only those trips where the respondent is away from home for less than 12 months are in scope of the NVS.
<b>International Visitor</b>	A person is defined as an international visitor to Australia if they are currently a resident overseas, have been in Australia less than one year and are aged 15 years or over.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## OVERVIEW

Murray Regional Tourism and Destination Riverina Murray have prepared Local Area Plans for 10 of the Murray region's prominent destinations.

The Local Area Plans are strategic documents that capture local aspirations and directions at a high-level to inform the Murray Region Destination Management Plan 2023-27 (available [here](#)) and NSW Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan 2023-30. This has ensured local needs and priorities have been captured across both Destination Management Plans.

The Local Area Plans provide the framework for local stakeholders to work collaboratively and in partnership with Murray Regional Tourism and Destination Riverina Murray towards strengthening the regional visitor economy.

**This Plan has been prepared for the destination of Albury Wodonga. This includes the destinations in proximity, as described in Section 1.**

## ANNUAL VISITOR ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

1.7M  
Visitors

\$494M  
Spend

## UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION WITHIN THE MURRAY REGION

Albury Wodonga is the Murray's leading arts and culture destination, with a range of quality cultural assets. These are complemented well by quality accommodation and dining, which creates a contemporary visitor experience.



## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR THIS DESTINATION

A range of recommended actions have been identified through consultation with industry and local government stakeholders during the Local Area Plan workshops, assessment of existing local documents and strategies, and in response to visitor economy needs and opportunities for the destination.

These actions are a guide only. It is the role of stakeholders to further investigate the viability and opportunity of each project.

The table below provides a summary of the recommended actions.

Product, Experience and Events	Infrastructure and Planning	Branding, Marketing and Visitor Servicing	Industry Development and Workforce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cruising Experience Investment</li> <li>• Deliver Murray River Experience Masterplan</li> <li>• First Nations Experience</li> <li>• Signature Events Calendar</li> <li>• Albury Cultural Precinct and Botanic Gardens Masterplans</li> <li>• Lauren Jackson Sport Centre Redevelopment and Upgrade</li> <li>• Activating the Night Time Economy</li> <li>• Nature Based, Soft Adventure Experiences</li> <li>• "On Farm" Experiences</li> <li>• Waterway Enhancement</li> <li>• Albury Entertainment Centre (AEC) Convention Wing Redevelopment</li> <li>• Flying Fruit Fly Circus Expansion</li> <li>• Murray Winter Night Time Events</li> <li>• Accommodation Investment</li> <li>• Bonegilla Migrant Experience</li> <li>• Enhance Wonga Wetlands</li> <li>• Gateway Island Tourism Development</li> <li>• Murray River Adventure Trail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electric Vehicle Charging Plan</li> <li>• Events Infrastructure</li> <li>• Transport Improvements and Advocacy</li> <li>• Infrastructure Servicing</li> <li>• Murray River Walking Bridge Connection</li> <li>• Advocacy To Address Housing Crisis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing Plan</li> <li>• Bookable Product and Packaging</li> <li>• Murray Region Local Ambassador Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Workforce Pathways and Promotion Program</li> <li>• Skills Development Plan</li> </ul>

# 1. ALBURY WODONGA LOCAL AREA PLAN

## 1.1. THIS PROJECT

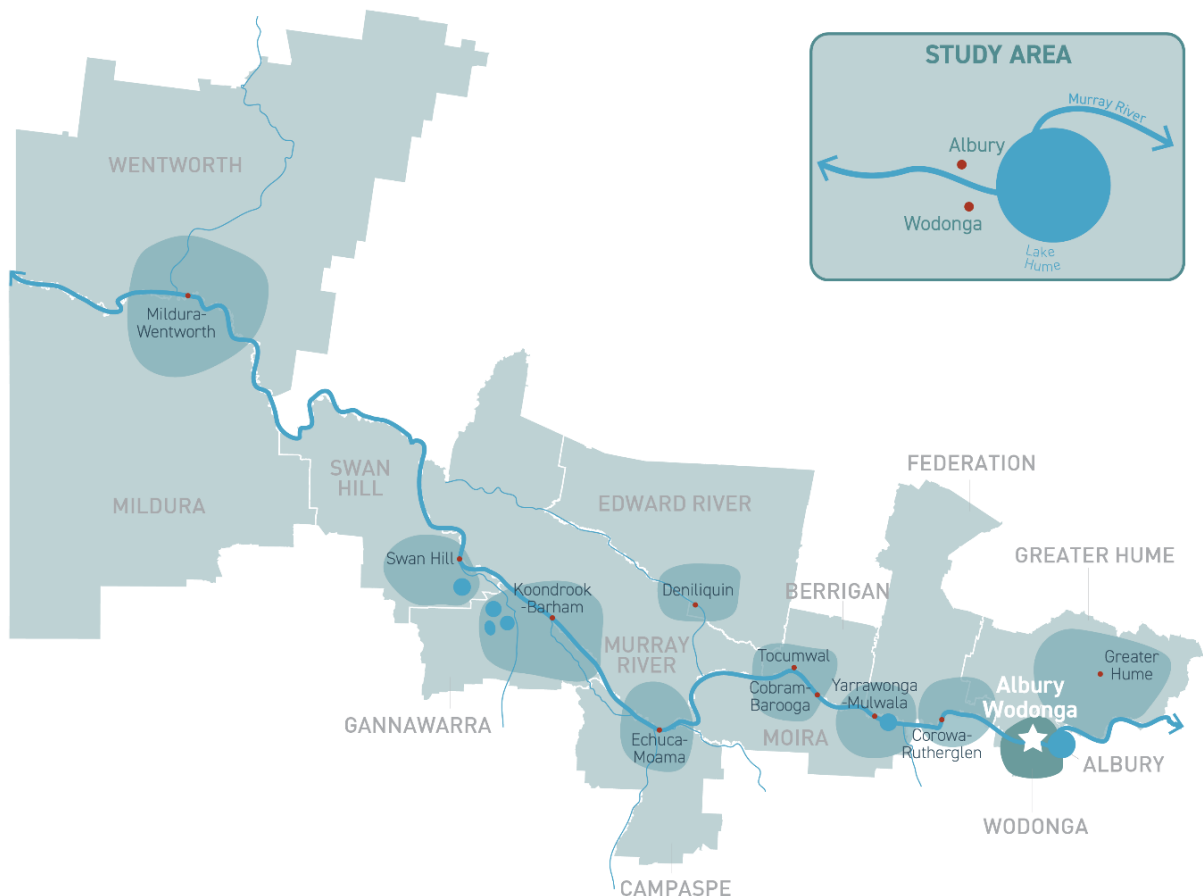
Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) and Destination Riverina Murray (DRM) have prepared Local Area Plans (Plan) for 10 of the Murray region’s prominent destinations, as shown in the map below.

These are strategic documents that capture local aspirations and directions at a high-level to inform the Murray Region Destination Management Plan (DMP) 2023-27 and the NSW Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan 2023-30. This has ensured local needs and priorities have been captured across both DMPs.

The Local Area Plans provide the framework for local stakeholders to work collaboratively and in partnership with MRT and DRM towards strengthening the regional visitor economy.

This Plan has been prepared for the destination of Albury Wodonga. This includes the destinations in proximity, as shown in the map below, and does not encompass all towns within the relevant Local Government Areas (LGAs).

F1. STUDY AREA



*This project has been funded by Murray Regional Tourism, Destination Riverina Murray, the Victorian State Government and Destination NSW.*

## PURPOSE AND INTENDED USE OF THE LOCAL AREA PLANS

The Local Area Plans are a partnership between MRT, DRM, Local Government, and industry stakeholders.

The purpose of these Plans is to respond to visitor economy needs and opportunities for key Murray region destinations, through a range of recommended actions and suggested next steps. It is intended that stakeholders will collaborate to further define the project specifics and drive the outcomes, in line with local priorities and resourcing.

The Plans are intended to be a reference document and a tool for local stakeholders and partners to collaborate at the destination level. The Plans do not replace local tourism plans and internal council plans.

## METHOD

An overview of the project method is shown adjacent.

This Plan has been informed by engagement with local visitor economy stakeholders, review of existing local documentation, and destination research using Tourism Research Australia (TRA) and market research undertaken for the Murray region.

A full-day workshop was undertaken with key stakeholders from industry, local government and other agencies as relevant to the destination. The purpose of the workshop was to identify local issues and opportunities, identify the unique selling proposition for the destination, and develop ideas and solutions for the visitor economy.

This process has ensured the Plan is grounded in local needs and aspirations for the destination.



### Context

Review of state, regional and local research, strategics and plans.  
*A full list of documents reviewed can be found in Appendix A.*



### Destination Snapshot

Review of visitation data, key products and experiences, market research and target markets.



### Key Stakeholder Workshop

1 workshop with 21 operators and government stakeholders.



### Project Identification and Prioritisation

Development of projects unique for this destination.



## 2. DESTINATION SNAPSHOT

### 2.1. VISITOR ECONOMY

This section provides a snapshot of the Albury Wodonga visitor profile, drawing on data from Tourism Research Australia (TRA), the widely accepted Australian Government data source tracking visitation across Australia.

A profile of existing domestic daytrip and overnight visitation has been provided for the 2019 calendar year<sup>1</sup>, in order to reflect a business-as-usual scenario prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data has been provided for Albury and Wodonga Local Government Areas, due to sampling constraints that prevent further fine-grain analysis.

#### OVERVIEW

Albury Wodonga attracts an average of 1.7 million visitors, accounting for 26% of total visitation to the Murray region.

Visitation to this destination is primarily driven by daytrip visitors (57%), who spend approximately \$178 million in the region. Daytrip visitors to Albury are relatively high yielding (\$207 per person) when compared to the average for the Murray region (\$138 per person) and Wodonga (\$97 per person).

Overnight visitors generate \$316 million in expenditure, which is significantly greater than daytrip visitors. Majority of this expenditure is driven by visitors to Albury, who spend on average \$472 per trip, compared to an average spend of \$351 per visitor to Wodonga.

#### DOMESTIC VISITOR PROFILE

Majority of daytrip visitors to Albury Wodonga are holiday visitors (41%), with a small proportion visiting friends and relatives (19%).

As regional cities, Albury and Wodonga attract a high proportion of daytrip visitors for other reasons (26%), which includes activities such as medical services, personal appointments, entertainment and shopping.

The visiting friends and relatives (VFR) market makes up the greatest proportion of overnight travel (41%), with a small proportion of holiday and leisure visitors (27%). A lack of compelling products and experiences may contribute to the considerably smaller holiday and leisure visitation within the overnight market.

Business travel to this destination is stronger than the Murray region as a whole, accounting for 14% of daytrip visitors and 21% of overnight visitors. This reinforces the strength of Albury Wodonga as a destination offering a variety of products and experiences to accommodate various markets, such as the business market and holiday/leisure markets.

Visitors are primarily engaging in high yielding activities, such as dining out, shopping and visiting attractions such as cinemas, theatres and clubs.

Due to the strong VFR market in this region, it is crucial locals are aware of attractions and experiences within their own city to help promote the region to their visiting friends and relatives and extract greater yield from this market.

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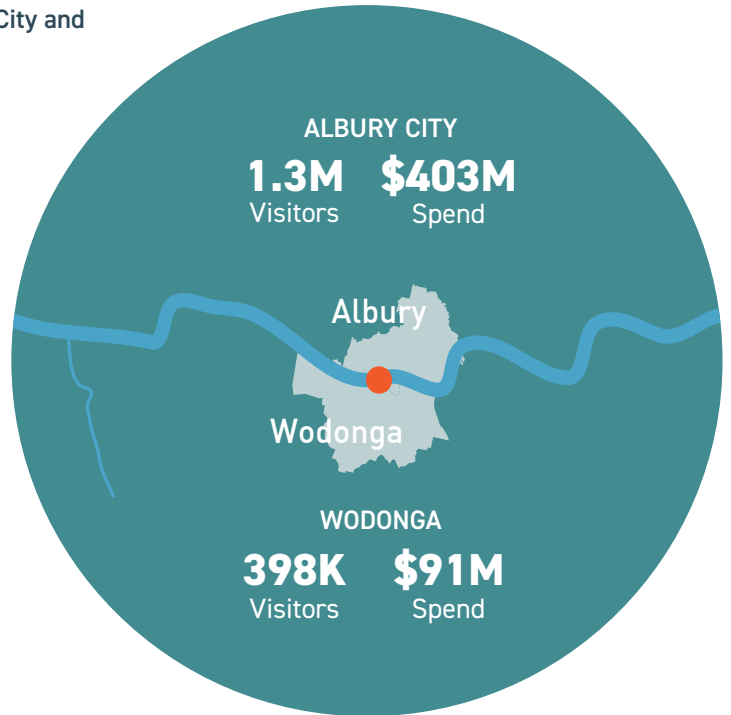
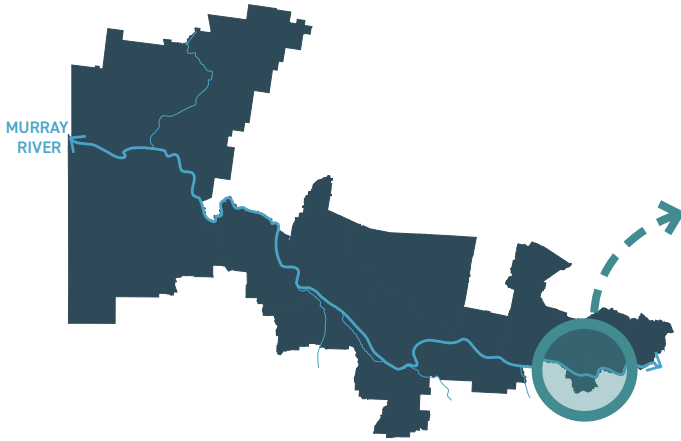
<sup>1</sup> Source: TRA. Visitor numbers, TRA, 2019, based on 2017-19 3 year average. Average spend per visitor, TRA LGA Profile, 2019, based on 2016-19 4 year average. Total spend, calculated by Urban Enterprise, average spend applied to visitor numbers.

# VISITOR ECONOMY OVERVIEW

## ALBURY WODONGA

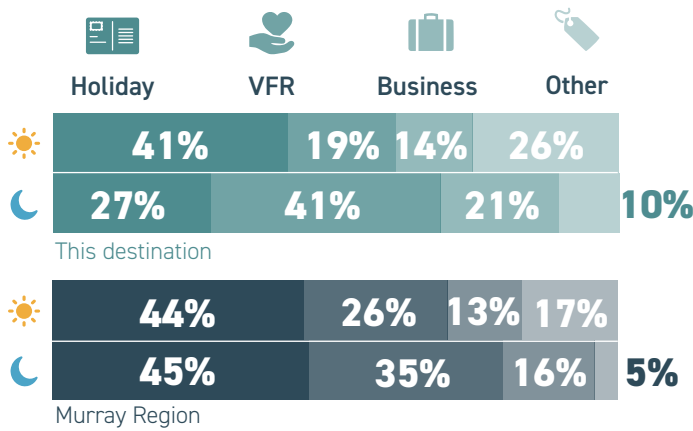
Based on Tourism Research Australia (TRA) data for Albury City and Wodonga, which form this destination.

This destination ■  
Murray Region ■

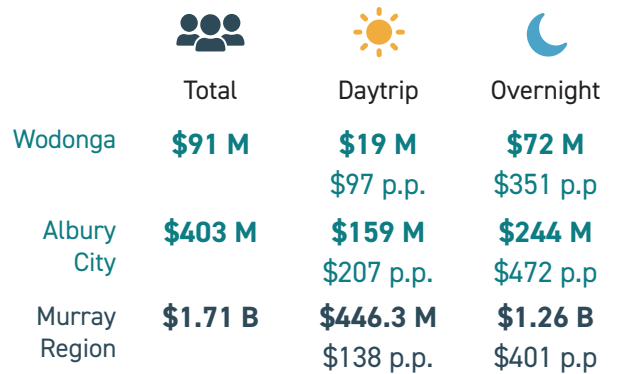


## DOMESTIC VISITOR PROFILE

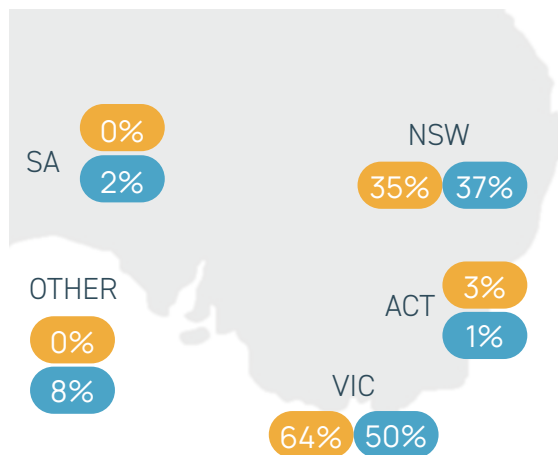
### PURPOSE OF VISIT



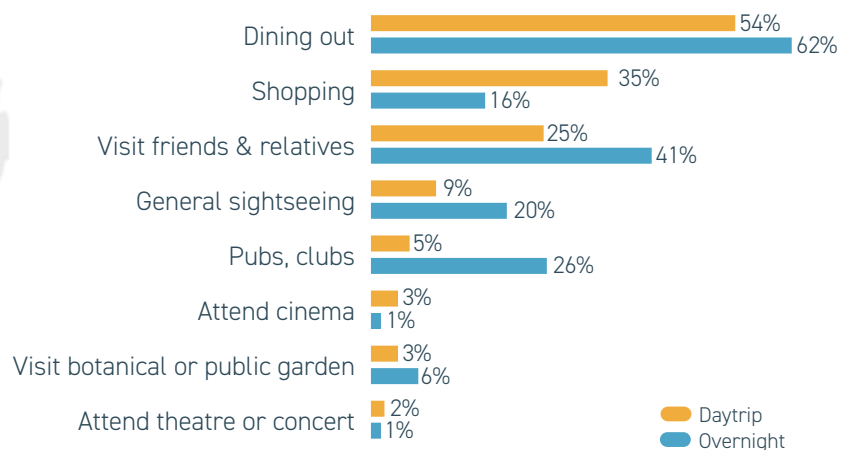
### VISITOR SPEND



### VISITOR ORIGIN



### VISITOR ACTIVITIES



Source: Tourism Research Australia (TRA). Visitor numbers, TRA, 2019, based on 2017-19 3 year average. Average spend per visitor, TRA LGA Profile, 2019, based on 2016-19 4 year average. Total spend, calculated by Urban Enterprise, average spend applied to visitor numbers.

## 2.2. TARGET MARKETS

The Murray region has a market of 5.1 million Australians. This represents past and potential visitors to the region, as identified through representative market research undertaken of 2,000 Australian residents.

These are visitors that travel regularly to regional Australia (at least once every two years pre-COVID) and are highly likely to book a future trip to the Murray region.

Segmentation of the Australian market for the Murray region is shown below, which helps to identify the current and target markets for this destination, to provide a focus for investment and marketing.

Each markets alignment with this destination has been determined below.

### T1. TARGET MARKET OVERVIEW

Proportion of Murray Region Target Market and Market Size				
Murray Habituals 38%	Back to Basics 8%	Road Trip 8%	Explorer and Discoverer 35%	Luxury Travellers 10%
				
1.93 Million	0.43 Million	0.40 Million	1.78 Million	0.52 Million
The traditional Murray visitor who travels to the Murray at least once every two years - the Murray's biggest advocate.	The simple traveller, the free spirit - escaping to nature to press pause on real life, spend time with loved ones, and hit reset.	Inspired by the freedom of a road trip, this market wants to explore the country, see new destinations and escape the city.	Socially conscious and adventurous travellers, open to travelling to new destinations and seeking new, unique experiences.	With a holiday mindset of indulgence, the luxury traveller seeks relaxation achieved through high quality experiences.
Strength of Market Alignment to Albury Wodonga and Reason for Target				
Weak	Weak	Strong	Strong	Strong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-sufficient travellers who typically self-cater and stay in holiday homes, caravan parks or free camping.</li> <li>- Stay for long trips during peak periods.</li> <li>- Travel in large groups, typically family groups, friend groups or multi-generational family groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High overlap in characteristics with Murray Habituals, but don't regularly visit or have a strong allegiance to the region.</li> <li>- Seek a relaxing nature-based experience away from the hustle and bustle of town.</li> <li>- Camping and caravanning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Travel for longer periods than other segments - opportunity to increase yield and length of stay.</li> <li>- Most likely to travel midweek and off peak – assist in reducing seasonality.</li> <li>- Opportunity for dispersal across the region as open to exploring all the Murray region's destinations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The largest market segment, predominately Millennials, not yet fully captured by the Murray region.</li> <li>- Young and open to new experiences, most likely to engage in a diverse range of experiences.</li> <li>- Want to pack their trip with activities and experiences - a key opportunity to increase visitor yield.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Critical market opportunity to grow visitor yield and support investment in more boutique offerings.</li> <li>- Attracted to food and wine, so growth in this sector is an opportunity to support local producers.</li> <li>- A shift in the perception of Murray region destinations.</li> </ul>

Source: Murray Region Market Research, Urban Enterprise, 2022.

## 2.3. AWARENESS

The following section demonstrates the awareness and reputation of the Murray River and its surrounding regions through consumer research of a representative sample of 2,000 Australians, undertaken in 2022.

### Awareness

Albury Wodonga is one of the Murray region's key visitor destinations, and also has relatively high awareness among the Australia population, with 29% of the population having heard of Albury Wodonga and having interest in visiting.

With high awareness and also high interest in visiting, Albury Wodonga is in an advantageous position to attract visitors from new and emerging markets. It is likely that many potential visitors are unaware of the well-developed arts and cultural offerings in Albury Wodonga and the strengthening food, wine and entertainment scene in Albury.

#### T2. AWARENESS OF DESTINATIONS IN THE MURRAY

Destination	I have heard the name and have interest in visiting	I have never heard of this place
Albury Wodonga	29%	23%
Cobram-Barooga	28%	43%
Cohuna	21%	55%
Corowa-Wahgunyah	23%	50%
Deniliquin	26%	39%
Echuca-Moama	26%	35%
Koondrook-Barham	19%	60%
Mildura	38%	12%
Rutherglen	24%	47%
Swan Hill	36%	22%
Tocumwal	19%	55%
Wentworth	31%	33%
Yarrawonga-Mulwala	23%	47%

Source: Murray Region Market Research by Urban Enterprise, 2022.

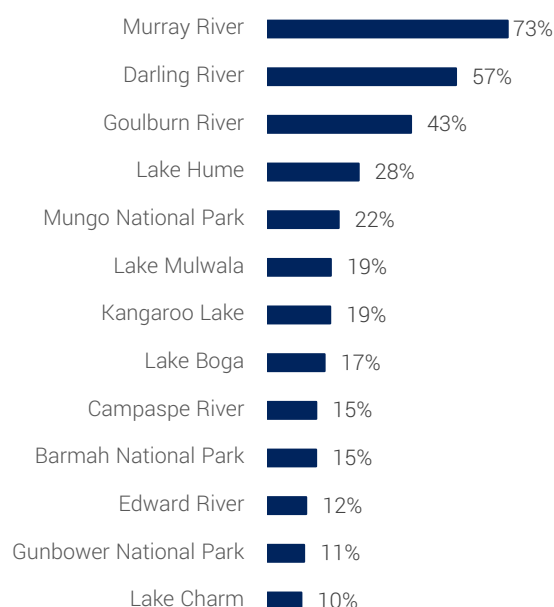
Albury Wodonga has a major nature-based asset, Lake Hume, in close proximity to the two cities.

Given the size of Lake Hume and its recreation opportunities, the lake has relatively low awareness in the Australia population (28%). The lake presents a significant opportunity for Albury Wodonga to leverage from, with further product and experience development.

The Murray River has the highest levels of awareness within the Australian market (73%), which highlights the importance of connection to the Murray River to strengthen destination awareness and association. However, the Murray River is a key feature of all destinations across the Murray region, therefore destinations cannot rely on the river as a point of difference.

Destinations must develop hero products and experiences to differentiate themselves from the rest of the Murray region.

#### F3. CONSUMER AWARENESS OF MURRAY REGION NATURE-BASED ASSETS



Source: Murray Region Market Research by Urban Enterprise, 2022.

## 2.4. MURRAY REGION PRODUCT STRENGTHS AND MARKET ASSOCIATIONS

### Murray Region Product Strengths

A number of regional product strengths within the Murray region were identified in the 2018 Murray Region DMP. These have been highlighted in the below figure.

The Murray River is the key strength of the Murray region. With this, a number of products and experiences have been developed to capitalise on this natural asset, including camping, bushwalking, water sports, fishing and river cruising and houseboating.

#### F4. MURRAY REGION PRODUCT STRENGTHS

Primary Strengths	Secondary Strengths
Water Sports	Nature based
Food, Wine and Produce	Business Events
Fishing	
Houseboats/River Cruise	<b>Emerging Strengths</b>
Golf	Indigenous
Festivals and Events	Arts and Culture
History and Heritage	Adventure

Source: Murray Region Destination Management Plan, 2018.

### What is the Murray Known for?

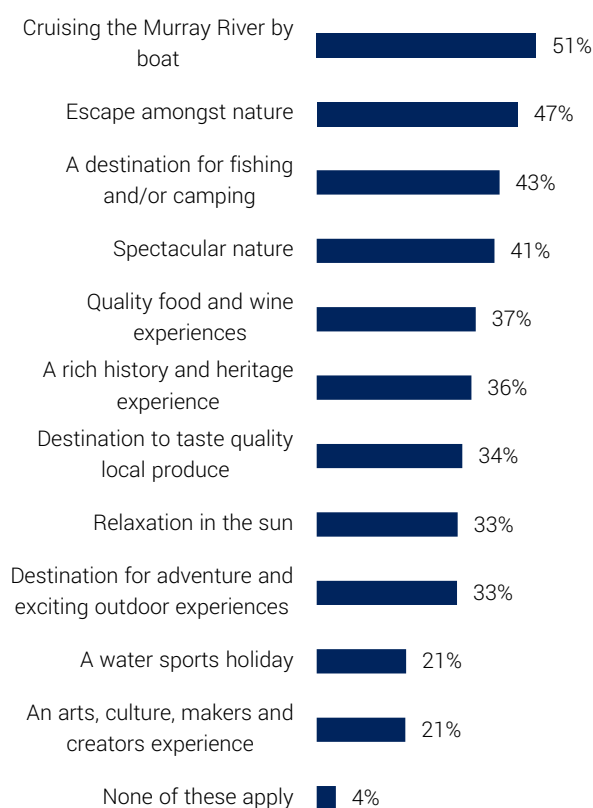
Nature-based attractions and experiences are at the core of what the Australian market perceives to be the "Murray experience".

The below figure shows the broader Australian market expects to cruise the Murray River by boat (51%), escape to nature (47%) and fish or camp (43%) when visiting the Murray region.

The broader Australian market lacks understanding of the breadth of products and experiences currently offered in the Murray region, as indicated by comparatively low perception of the Murray region as a destination for quality food and wine experiences (37%) and quality local produce (37%).

Nature based experiences are not considered a primary strength of Albury Wodonga, however there is opportunity for further investment and development of nature based experiences and cruising.

#### F5. PERCEPTION OF THE MURRAY REGION



Source: Murray Region Market Research by Urban Enterprise, 2022.

## 2.5. DESTINATION STRENGTHS AND UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION

### Product Strengths and Potential Hero Experiences for this Destination

Albury Wodonga is a well-developed visitor destination that has a range of products and experiences.

Product strengths of Albury Wodonga include:

- Arts and cultural product including Hyphen Wodonga Library Gallery, MAMA precinct, Gateway Village, Burraja Gallery, Wagirra Trail and Yindyamarra Sculpture Walk, Crossing Place Trail, Fruit Fly Circus, and Gateway Island Cultural Trail.
- Food, entertainment and dining, experienced through the region's cafes, restaurants, bars and pubs.
- Agritourism experiences, including RADGrowers and Wolki Farm.
- Wonga Wetlands, nature-based tourism and waterway recreation including experiences on the Murray River and Lake Hume.
- Visitor accommodation – Albury has one of the largest commercial accommodation sectors in the Murray with a number of branded accommodation establishments.
- Touring – Albury Wodonga is located on the Hume Highway and supports touring visitors travelling across Australia.
- Walking and cycling – an emerging trail destination, Albury Wodonga is the commencement point for a number of trails including the High Country Rail Trail and Hume and Hovell Walking Track.
- Gateway to the Murray region and North East Victoria, serviced by key air routes (SYD, MEL, BNE, ADE) via one of two regional airports, Major Rail Station on Sydney - Melbourne rail line.
- Major events and festivals such as Borderville Circus Festival, Commercial Club Albury Gold Cup Carnival, and other events.

Albury Wodonga Unique Selling Proposition (USP) within the Murray Region

**Albury Wodonga is the Murray's leading arts and culture destination, with key assets listed adjacent. These are complemented well by quality accommodation and dining, which creates a contemporary visitor experience.**



How to build on the destination USP?

**The USP needs to continue to evolve to meet market expectations, which means there is a need to continue to strengthen the arts and cultural offer and deliver quality and unique food and accommodation experiences.**

**Opportunities include:**

- **Facilitate development of more grass roots artisan and cultural development experiences that add richness to the experience.**
- **Enhance the gateway village makers precinct.**
- **Indigenous cultural experiences.**
- **Development of Contemporary boutique food and wine experiences.**
- **Continued investment in arts precincts.**
- **Continued support in the development of and investment in major sporting events and recreational infrastructure.**

## 2.6. GOVERNANCE

The table below outlines the governance structure for tourism in this destination and the responsibilities for each of the key organisations.

Local Government plays a crucial role in supporting the visitor economy, particularly in working closely with industry to support product and experience development and industry growth.

**The two Councils have a strong working relationship and have developed a coordinated approach to tourism development and marketing, working towards a shared vision and shared goals for the destination.**

### T3. GOVERNANCE OVERVIEW

Organisation	Overview	Activities
<b>Destination NSW</b>	Lead government agency for the NSW tourism and major events sectors. Major role in positioning NSW as one of the world's premier tourism events destinations, as well as achieving the NSW Government's goal of tripling visitation expenditure by 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destination marketing.</li> <li>• Industry support and engagement.</li> <li>• Industry training.</li> <li>• Product development.</li> </ul>
<b>Visit Victoria</b>	Primary tourism and events company for the State Government, involved in research, advocacy and domestic and international marketing. Visit Victoria is a key partner in promotion and strategic planning for the tourism sector. Council should maintain a strong relationship to ensure alignment with Visit Victoria marketing initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destination marketing.</li> <li>• Industry support and engagement.</li> <li>• Industry training.</li> <li>• Product development.</li> </ul>
<b>Office of the NSW Cross-Border Commissioner</b>	The Office of the Cross Border Commissioner advocates and represents cross border communities and businesses. The NSW Cross-Border Commissioner works alongside local, state and federal bodies to ensure cross-border communities and businesses are not negatively impacted by two sets of legislations and policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy.</li> <li>• Industry support.</li> </ul>
<b>Victoria's Cross Border Commissioner</b>	Victoria's Cross Border Commissioner works with residents, businesses and community organisations along Victoria's border to identify and advocate for change. The Cross Border Commissioner also works with the Office of the NSW Cross-Border Commissioner to ensure economic and community benefits for border towns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy.</li> <li>• Industry support.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Regional NSW</b>	The Department of Regional NSW is a central agency for regional issues, building regional economies and communities, managing the use of regional land, and ensuring that government investment into regional NSW is fair and delivers positive outcomes for local communities and businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Economic Development Plans.</li> <li>• Regional Event funding.</li> <li>• Tourism Infrastructure Funding.</li> <li>• Regional Investment support.</li> <li>• Regional strategic planning.</li> </ul>

Organisation	Overview	Activities
<b>Murray Regional Tourism</b>	<p>The Regional Tourism Board and peak tourism organisation for the Murray region in NSW and Victoria.</p> <p>MRT is the lead cross border entity for strategic planning in the Murray region and collaborates with government and industry partners to undertake planning, marketing, product, industry and infrastructure development, and advocacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destination marketing.</li> <li>• Industry support and engagement.</li> <li>• Product development.</li> <li>• Investment attraction and facilitation.</li> </ul>
<b>Destination Riverina Murray</b>	<p>DRM is one of seven Destination Networks (DNs) established by the NSW state government to represent the visitor economy in regional NSW. Its principal role is to represent and coordinate the growth and development of the NSW Riverina Murray visitor economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy.</li> <li>• Industry training.</li> <li>• Product development.</li> <li>• Industry support and engagement.</li> <li>• Investment attraction and facilitation.</li> </ul>
<b>Local Government</b> <i>Albury and Wodonga Councils</i>	<p>Councils act as enabler for the visitor economy by providing the foundations, including strategic planning, infrastructure services, assistance in product development, investment attraction, and support to the local industry.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor services.</li> <li>• Destination marketing.</li> <li>• Investment attraction/facilitation.</li> <li>• Industry training.</li> <li>• Product development.</li> </ul>
<b>Albury Business Connect</b>	<p>Albury Business Connect is the peak representative body for businesses in Albury. The membership-based organisation provides ongoing support to businesses through regular industry updates' as well as networking and professional development opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy.</li> <li>• Communicating industry updates and news.</li> <li>• Professional development.</li> <li>• Industry networking and support.</li> </ul>
<b>Business Wodonga</b>	<p>Business Wodonga is the peak business representative body in Wodonga. The membership-based organisation works with business to ensure the success of these businesses and the wider Wodonga region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy.</li> <li>• Industry networking and support.</li> <li>• Industry representation.</li> </ul>
<b>Local Aboriginal Land Council</b> <i>Albury and District</i>	<p>Local Aboriginal Land Councils represent Aboriginal affairs at a local level and aim to protect the interests and further the aspirations of Aboriginal communities.</p> <p>This includes working for the return of the culturally significant and economically viable land, pursuing cultural, social and economic independence for Aboriginal people and preserving Aboriginal land rights.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land acquisition.</li> <li>• Establishment of commercial enterprises and community benefit schemes.</li> <li>• Maintenance and enhancement of Aboriginal culture, identity and heritage.</li> </ul>



### 3. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The following section examines the challenges and opportunities for this destination, which have been identified through research and engagement with local visitor economy stakeholders, and review of Council documentation.

These considerations have been used to inform the recommended actions for this destination.

#### T4. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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##### Markets

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- Product mix is well suited to emerging higher yield demographics, however there is a need for products and experiences to attract the younger millennial market.
- Opportunity to engage regular travellers in new products and experiences to increase their yield.
- Opportunity to increase mid-week visitation, through attraction of education and business markets.
- Continue to build on arts and cultural offering to expand the emerging high yield market.
- Opportunity to leverage the linkage with Falls Creek, Mount Hotham and Snowy Mountains as a gateway to the ski resorts.
- Low levels of overnight holiday leisure visitation – focus on this market will greatly strengthen weekend and holiday period travel.
- Events and business events markets are key market opportunities for visitor growth.
- Sports market is strong, and these families are high yielding due to their length of stay.
- Opportunity to further attract family market for holiday purposes, including delivery of more family-based events that attract the younger market.
- High awareness of the destination in the Australia market – opportunity to leverage from this.

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##### Product, Experience and Events

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- Conferencing is a major opportunity however there is a need for high quality dedicated larger scale conferencing facilities.
  - Need for facilities to host business, education and sporting market midweek, including conferencing centre.
  - Events struggling to reinvigorate after COVID.
  - Sporting infrastructure is continuously improving and should remain a focus for events.
  - Continued opportunities for growth in the arts and culture experiences and galleries. There is high demand for bookable experiences and opportunity to create packaged arts and cultural offering.
  - Quality dining and entertainment are a growing strength and should be promoted and enhanced further.
  - Opportunity to increase development of agritourism product and experiences, food provenance, production and farming techniques
  - Low levels of nature-based product creates difficulty aligning with the Murray Region Destination Management Plan. There is a market expectation to be able to have a nature-based experience that isn't currently available.
  - Lake Hume is underutilised as a tourism asset and has potential for further activation and enhancement. There is a need for policy change to allow commercial boats with bathroom facilities to operate at Lake Hume.
  - Opportunity to leverage Albury Wodonga as a hub to explore the broader region e.g.: Corowa, Beechworth, Rutherglen etc.
  - Cycle tourism opportunities, including establishment of Albury Wodonga as a cycling friendly town and leveraging from existing and planned infrastructure including Murray River Adventure Trail, High Country Rail Trail and the region's mountain bike parks.
  - Gateway Island needs to be a focus for enhancement, including delivery of Gateway Island Masterplan.
  - Untapped First Nations stories and experiences.
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**Accommodation**

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- Future investment in accommodation is needed to meet projected market requirements, as identified in the Murray Region Accommodation Diversification and Gap Analysis project.
- Packaging together accommodation with experiences will increase yield and attract high value
- Need for interesting and experiential accommodation to attract new markets.
- Accommodation opportunities overlooking the Murray River and Lake Hume.

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**Infrastructure and Planning**

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- Need to activate the river frontage, including increasing accessibility to the waterways through boat ramps, public pontoons and public temporary mooring points, as well as through private sector activations.
- Poor connectivity between walking and cycling paths and the Murray River.
- Lack of infrastructure for growing caravanning market, including parking and dump points.
- No public temporary mooring available for visitors via the Murray River.
- Albury airport is a strength and continued advocacy for flights will strengthen the destination.

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**Brand, Marketing and Visitor Servicing**

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- Opportunity to continue to build on the strength of the Albury Wodonga brand.
- Increase digital presence of businesses.
- Increase local knowledge of the destination offering.

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**Industry Development and Workforce**

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- Labour shortages in terms of both skilled and unskilled workers.
  - Need to attract backpackers to the region, encouraging them to work and play in the region.
  - Reliance on volunteers has major impact on events, particularly post covid change in volunteerism. Lack of volunteers to support events delivery, which impacts the viability and long-term sustainability of events.
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## 4. RECOMMENDED ACTION PLAN

### READING THIS ACTION PLAN

Recommended actions have emerged as a result of consultation with industry and local government stakeholders during the Local Area Plan workshops, an assessment of existing local documents and strategies, and in response to considerations for tourism development.

The following provides a guide for interpreting the Recommended Action Plan.

#### Recommended Actions

Each of the recommended actions have been identified in response to the key considerations for tourism development in this destination and aim to address visitor economy needs and opportunities over the next 5 years.

It is the role of key stakeholders to further investigate the viability and opportunity of each project.

#### Suggested Next Steps

The identified next steps are a suggestion to enable stakeholders to take forward the recommended actions.

The next steps are to be used as a guide and will be informed by local resourcing and priorities.

#### Priority

The priority level for each of the recommended actions have been identified by determining their level of importance, logical staging, as well as which actions can be achieved relatively quickly.

The following priority levels have been used:

Short-term within 1 year	Medium-term 1-3 years	Long-term 4-5 years +
Ongoing		

#### Key Partners

Key partners have been identified for each of the recommended actions. Current roles and responsibilities of these stakeholders are identified in the Destination Snapshot section of this document.

Key partners include:

- Murray Regional Tourism
- Destination Riverina Murray
- State and Federal Governments and agencies, including:
  - Regional Development Victoria
  - Department of Regional NSW
  - NSW Crown Lands
  - Goulburn Murray Water
  - Murray–Darling Basin Authority
  - Parks Victoria (Parks Vic)
  - NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services
  - Regional Roads Victoria (RRV)
  - Transport for NSW
  - Public Transport Victoria
- Local Government agencies (Councils), including:
  - Albury City Council (Albury CC)
  - Wodonga City Council (Wodonga CC)
- Parklands Albury Wodonga (PAW)
- Industry

## 4.1. PRODUCT, EXPERIENCE AND EVENTS

### T5. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p><b>Cruising Experience Investment</b></p> <p>Refer to the Murray Cruising Strategy for key project opportunities. Specific needs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Water equipment hire locations.</li> <li>- Paddle sports hubs.</li> <li>- Marina at Lake Hume.</li> <li>- Nature based and First Nations cruising experience.</li> <li>- Houseboats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council and stakeholders to facilitate cruising investment.</li> <li>- Work with existing cruise operators to elevate offering and address barriers to operation.</li> </ul>	<p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> <p>Industry</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>GMW</p> <p>MDBA</p>	Short term
<p><b>Deliver Murray River Experience Masterplan</b></p> <p>Continue to implement the Murray River Experience Masterplan to improve connection between the City and the River, and to enhance the riverfront experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implement the revised masterplan and seek funding for investment.</li> </ul>	<p>Albury CC</p> <p>GMW</p> <p>MDBA</p>	Short term
<p><b>First Nations Experience</b></p> <p>Building on the arts and cultural strengths of Albury Wodonga there is opportunity to develop a First Nations experience. This may focus on the Murray River and include nature based and cruising opportunity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with First Nations peoples to establish a year-round cultural experience.</li> </ul>	<p>First Nations Groups</p> <p>LALC</p> <p>Councils</p>	Short term
<p><b>Signature Events Calendar</b></p> <p>Albury Wodonga should support new or grow existing events, with a focus on supporting new signature events including a signature arts/culture destination festival and major regional food and wine festival</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review the events calendar and seek to provide funding to support new signature events that strengthen the Albury Wodonga brand in arts and cultural tourism.</li> </ul>	<p>Councils</p> <p>Industry</p>	Short term
<p><b>Albury Cultural Precinct and Botanic Gardens Masterplans</b></p> <p>Implementation of the Albury City Council masterplans including the Cultural Precinct Masterplan and Albury Botanic Gardens Masterplan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implement the Cultural Precinct and Albury Botanic Gardens Masterplans.</li> </ul>	<p>Albury CC</p>	Short to medium term
<p><b>Lauren Jackson Sport Centre Redevelopment and Upgrade</b></p> <p>Redevelopment of Lauren Jackson Sport Centre in line with Albury City Council masterplan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support the redevelopment and seek funding for the Lauren Jackson Sport Centre.</li> </ul>	<p>Albury CC</p> <p>Sporting clubs</p>	Short to medium term

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p><b>Activating the Nighttime Economy</b></p> <p>Albury Wodonga has a strong dining scene however there is further opportunity to strengthen the night time economy through activations and place making initiatives. Locations such as Junction Place and MAMA precinct provide opportunity to host night events and activations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a night time economy strategy.</li> </ul>	<p>Councils</p> <p>Industry</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p><b>Nature Based, Soft Adventure Experiences</b></p> <p>Albury Wodonga has potential to enhance its nature-based offering with the establishment of soft adventure experiences such as tree tops walks, canoe and kayak hire, or other adventure activities such as luges etc.</p> <p>There is opportunity to deliver this at Gateway Island to enhance the precinct as an attraction. Livewire Park in Lorne provides a successful precedent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify a location for an attraction that can provide a range of soft-adventure experiences on Gateway Island.</li> <li>- Promote the opportunity to the private sector and facilitate planning and delivery.</li> </ul>	<p>Industry</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p><b>“On Farm” Experiences</b></p> <p>Promote local produce by supporting development of farm open days, on-farm experiences and farm gates, and paddock to plate dining experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MRT to share agri-tourism research and recommendations with industry through further engagement with the sector.</li> </ul>	<p>Local producers</p> <p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p><b>Waterway Enhancement</b></p> <p>Activate waterways across the Murray region. Opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Waterfront dining.</li> <li>- Pop-up food and beverage on riverfront.</li> <li>- Floating restaurant.</li> <li>- Infrastructure.</li> <li>- Picnic Areas.</li> <li>- Wonga Wetlands.</li> <li>- Bonegilla Township water access points.</li> <li>- Wodonga Creek development – access and activation.</li> <li>- Fishing charters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council to work with MRT to explore opportunities for waterway enhancement and activation, in alignment with Council’s priorities.</li> </ul>	<p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>Industry</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p><b>Albury Entertainment Centre (AEC) Convention Wing Redevelopment</b></p> <p>Key features of the concept design include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expansion of the Convention Wing to cater for large-scale business, conference and tourism events, including increased seating capacity and exhibition space.</li> <li>- Improved connection to QEII, MAMA, the Library, Museum and Retro Lane Café (Cultural Precinct).</li> <li>- Development of a formal plaza and meeting place at the venue entry to better facilitate larger conferences/concurrent events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to advocate for funding to deliver the convention wing.</li> </ul>	<p>Albury CC</p> <p>Industry</p>	<p>Medium to long term</p>

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p><b>Flying Fruit Fly Circus Expansion</b> Expansion of the Flying Fruit Fly Circus centre.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support the expansion of the Flying Fruit Fly Circus centre.</li> </ul>	<p>Industry Albury CC</p>	<p>Medium to long term</p>
<p><b>Murray Winter Night Time Events</b> Delivery of signature, region-wide cultural events in the off-peak (i.e. winter). There is opportunity for this to be a unique sequence of events within the context of Australia, providing an accessible and contemporary back to nature experience, incorporating Aboriginal stories and experiences in the unique Murray setting. The event direction needs to be set by MRT, and local event direction to be determined by Council's in collaboration with MRT and industry. An event series can be held across Albury Wodonga focusing on arts and culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MRT to support the development and promotion of events.</li> <li>- Councils to allocate funding to local event.</li> <li>- Work with Traditional Owners and private operators to develop the event concept and program.</li> <li>- Identify grant opportunities and seek funding from state government agencies to support the event.</li> </ul>	<p>MRT DRM Industry Councils</p>	<p>Long term</p>
<p><b>Accommodation Investment</b> Refer to the Murray Region Accommodation Study for project details to attract investment in the identified priority projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reinvestment in Lake Hume Resort, Albury.</li> <li>- Holiday Park (Big 4 or similar), Lake Hume.</li> <li>- Wodonga Hotel (Junction Place).</li> <li>- Boutique Hotel.</li> <li>- Holiday Park.</li> <li>- Bonegilla Migrant Experience Accommodation.</li> <li>- Nature-Based Accommodation.</li> <li>- Farm Stays, Albury and Greater Hume.</li> <li>- Health and Wellness Spa Retreat.</li> <li>- Backpacker accommodation.</li> <li>- Reinvestment in Motels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council should facilitate investment by identifying suitable sites, with consideration of suitable zoning / need for rezoning.</li> <li>- Promote the opportunity to a developer and facilitate planning process.</li> </ul>	<p>Industry Councils</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Bonegilla Migrant Experience</b> Bonegilla Migrant Experience has seen substantial investment over the past 10 years. There is a need to see continued investment in the precinct to strengthen the attraction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to deliver on the Bonegilla strategic plan including potential for visitor accommodation, expansion of trails and connection with Lake Hume.</li> </ul>	<p>Wodonga CC</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Enhance Wonga Wetlands</b> Wonga Wetlands presents an opportunity for further development of nature based and eco-tourism experiences targeted to holiday leisure and education markets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deliver the new cultural and visitor education centre.</li> <li>- Develop a wildlife experience at Wonga Wetlands.</li> <li>- Develop First Nations cultural experience.</li> <li>- Develop camping experience.</li> </ul>	<p>Councils First Nations Groups</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<b>Gateway Island Tourism Development</b>			
The Gateway Island Masterplan identifies a range of opportunities for development and enhancement of the precinct. These should be the focus of investment.	- Continue to deliver the Gateway Island Masterplan.	Councils	Ongoing
<b>Murray River Adventure Trail</b>			
Investment in the Murray River Adventure Trail is underway across the Murray region. Some stages have been funded, however there is further design and construction work required to deliver on stages 2 and 3 of the trail. This should consider linkages with the Wagirra Trail.	- Develop trail design for the Albury Wodonga Section. - Continue to advocate for funding.	MRT DRM Councils Parks Vic NPWS PAW	Ongoing

## 4.2. INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING

### T6. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p><b>Electric Vehicle Charging Plan</b></p> <p>Develop a plan to establish EV charging points across Albury Wodonga including in public car parks and within accommodation facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop an EV charging point plan.</li> </ul>	<p>Industry</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p><b>Events Infrastructure</b></p> <p>There is a need to improve infrastructure at major events precincts including toilet upgrades, power upgrades and lighting upgrades.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertake a plan for infrastructure upgrades at event facilities.</li> <li>- Advocate for investment.</li> </ul>	<p>Councils</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p><b>Transport Improvements and Advocacy</b></p> <p>Deliver the Albury Wodonga Integrated Transport Strategy (MOVE), advocate for increased and better passenger rail services, and facilitate private enterprise delivery. Other required transport initiatives to be delivered by private enterprise, including shuttle buses for events and linking to the airport, and EV charging stations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote shuttle bus and EV charging opportunities to private sector.</li> <li>- Council to map EV charging stations for visitor information.</li> </ul>	<p>Councils</p> <p>Private sector</p> <p>PTV</p> <p>Transport NSW</p> <p>RRV</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p><b>Infrastructure Servicing</b></p> <p>Services infrastructure to allow new development and business investment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Address water pressure constraints that impact new developments.</li> <li>- Mobile network and coverage / NBN.</li> <li>- Sewerage and water capacity where required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with servicing authorities to deliver required infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<p>Servicing authorities</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p><b>Murray River Walking Bridge Connection</b></p> <p>In order to connect the two towns better there is a need to establish a walking/cycling bridge that links Albury with Gateway Island (no vehicle access).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plan and design walking/cycling bridge and pathway connection between Albury and Gateway Island.</li> </ul>	<p>Councils</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p><b>Advocacy To Address Housing Crisis</b></p> <p>Continued advocacy to State and Federal Governments to address housing crisis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MRT and Councils to work with regional stakeholders to quantify housing needs and delivery of programs to meet required demand.</li> </ul>	<p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> <p>RDV</p> <p>DRNSW</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>



## 4.3. BRAND, MARKETING AND VISITOR SERVICING

### T7. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p><b>Marketing Plan</b></p> <p>Continue to prepare and deliver a detailed Marketing Plan for Albury Wodonga with consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Targeting social media to targeted audiences.</li> <li>- Influencers to the region and knowing target markets.</li> <li>- Continue to explore contemporary marketing initiatives and channels relevant to Albury Wodonga audiences.</li> <li>- Digital advertising - not visible in region.</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deliver a marketing plan with consideration of digital marketing.</li> </ul>	Councils	Short term
<p><b>Bookable Product and Packaging</b></p> <p>There are limited online bookable products in Albury Wodonga. This presents an opportunity to increase length of stay and improve visitor experience.</p>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop bookable product and product packages including accommodation and dining packages.</li> </ul>	Industry Councils	Medium term
<p><b>Murray Region Local Ambassador Project</b></p> <p>MRT to develop a region-wide program to encourage local knowledge of and local pride in the tourism industry. This should include ongoing initiatives that aim to educate local industry and residents about the product offering and events, including notification of new business, events and promotional activities to create engagement. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Incentive system for residents and industry to engage in tourism offerings and promote through social media.</li> <li>- MRT branded business swap card system to encourage cross-business promotion and visitor information.</li> <li>- Local area tourism industry communication framework.</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MRT in collaboration with Councils to develop and deliver plan.</li> <li>- Councils to deliver actions at local level.</li> </ul>	MRT DRM Councils Industry	Ongoing

## 4.4. INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE

### T8. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<b>Regional Workforce Pathways and Promotion Program</b>			
MRT to develop and implement a framework that promotes the attractiveness of the tourism industry and attracts new workforce.			
The program should be twofold:			
- Work in the Murray promotion to attract new tourism industry workforce (think 'Want To Work in Paradise' promotion from Tourism Queensland). This should consider non-monetary incentives for new workers to the region.	- MRT to develop a regional workforce skills gap analysis and campaigns.	MRT DRM Councils	Short term and Ongoing
- Development of pathways program to attract and retain staff, including:	- MRT to work with local Councils and other stakeholders (jobs boards, employment networks etc) to promote opportunities.	Secondary schools Higher education Employment networks	
o Attraction of secondary, tertiary and international students.			
o Communication of clear progression pathways within and between business.			
o Encouraging use of staff sharing platform to provide consistency of work.			
<b>Skills Development Plan</b>			
Using the outcomes of the regional workforce gap analysis and feedback from industry, collaborate with TAFE's, LLEN's and higher education providers to deliver tailored and location-based industry training solutions.			
- Undertake workshop with industry to identify specific skill and training needs.	- Work with higher education providers to develop courses and course material.	Councils Industry MRT DRM Higher education TAFEs	Short term and Ongoing

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

### Regional Documents

- Murray Regional Tourism Annual Report 2019-20
- Murray Regional Tourism Strategic Plan 2021-24
- Murray Region Destination Management Plan 2018-2022
- Murray Region Cruising Strategy 2022
- Murray Region Accommodation Study 2022
- Murray Region Consumer Research 2022
- RDA Murray Strategic Plan 2019
- NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030
- Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan 2023-30
- Riverina Murray Accommodation Market Assessment 2019

### Wodonga City Council

- Gateway Island Masterplan Report 2018
- City of Wodonga Cultural Services Plan 2021-2026

### Albury City Council

- Albury Wodonga Visitor Economy Trends Report 2020
- Albury City Council Albury CBD Masterplan 2009
- Albury City Council Albury Riverside Precinct Concept Plan 2021
- Albury City Council Riverside Precinct Stage 2 Refined Concept Design 2016
- Albury Wodonga Destination Management Plan 2019-2023
- Albury City Council Economic Indicators 2021
- Albury City Council Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020
- Murray River Experience, Albury City Council 2007

### Additional Documents

- Lake Hume Site Plan Recommendations and Architectural Concept 2018
- Two Cities One Community Strategic Plan 2017-21
- Goulburn Murray Water Lake Hume Land and On-Water Management Plan 2015

