

FEBRUARY 2023

COBRAM, BAROOGA, TOCUMWAL AND SURROUNDS 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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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1. COBRAM, BAROOGA, TOCUMWAL AND SURROUNDS LOCAL AREA PLAN	3
1.1. THIS PROJECT	3
2. DESTINATION SNAPSHOT	5
2.1. VISITOR ECONOMY	5
2.2. TARGET MARKETS	7
2.3. AWARENESS	8
2.4. MURRAY REGION PRODUCT STRENGTHS AND MARKET ASSOCIATIONS	9
2.5. DESTINATION STRENGTHS AND UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION	10
2.6. GOVERNANCE	11
3. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT	14
4. RECOMMENDED ACTION PLAN	16
4.1. PRODUCT, EXPERIENCE AND EVENTS	17
4.2. INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING	20
4.3. BRAND, MARKETING AND VISITOR SERVICING	21
4.4. INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE	23
APPENDICES	25
APPENDIX A DOCUMENTS REVIEWED	25
FIGURES	
F1. STUDY AREA	3
F2. VISITOR ECONOMY OVERVIEW	6
F3. CONSUMER AWARENESS OF MURRAY REGION NATURE-BASED ASSETS	8
F4. MURRAY REGION PRODUCT STRENGTHS	9
F5. PERCEPTION OF THE MURRAY REGION	9
TABLES	
T1. TARGET MARKET OVERVIEW	7
T2. AWARENESS OF DESTINATIONS IN THE MURRAY	8
T3. GOVERNANCE OVERVIEW	11
T4. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT	14
T5. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	17
T6. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	20
T7. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	21
T8. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	23

ACRONYMS

DMP	Destination Management Plan
DN	Destination Networks
DRNSW	Department of Regional NSW
DRM	Destination Riverina Murray
GMW	Goulburn Murray Water
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
PTV	Public Transport Victoria
RDV	Regional Development Victoria
TRA	Tourism Research Australia
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Daytrip Visitor	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.
Overnight Visitor	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.
International Visitor	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 for download [here](#)) and the 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 Cobram, Barooga, Tocumwal and surrounds. This includes the destinations in proximity, as described in Section 1.

ANNUAL VISITOR ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

1M
Visitors

\$251M
Spend

UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION WITHIN THE MURRAY REGION

Cobram, Barooga, Tocumwal and the surrounding region offer a uniquely tranquil Murray region experience, with natural, sandy in-land beaches, riverside camping and paddling experiences located adjacent to quaint holiday towns.



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"> • Bullanginya Art Walk Development • Cruising Experience Investment • Registered Star Gazing Site • Signature Events Calendar • Food and Drink Activation • Waterway Enhancement • Wellness Experience Development • Kennedy Park and Thompsons Beach Development • Murray River Festival of Golf • "On Farm" Experiences • Murray Winter Night Time Events • Aviation Tourism Development Plan • Accommodation Investment • Murray River Adventure Trail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric Vehicle Charging Plan • Access and Transport Advocacy • Advocacy for Infrastructure Servicing • Shuttle Bus • Wharves and Mooring Infrastructure • Advocacy to Address Housing Crisis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bookable Product and Packaging • Cross-Border Brand Strategy • Cross-Border Marketing Plan • Visitor Information Review and Delivery • Murray Region Local Ambassador Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Workforce Pathways and Promotion Program • Skills Development Plan • Governance • Digital Literacy for Operators • Networking and Capacity Building • Encourage Weekend Trading

1. COBRAM, BAROOGA, TOCUMWAL AND SURROUNDS LOCAL AREA PLAN

1.1. THIS PROJECT

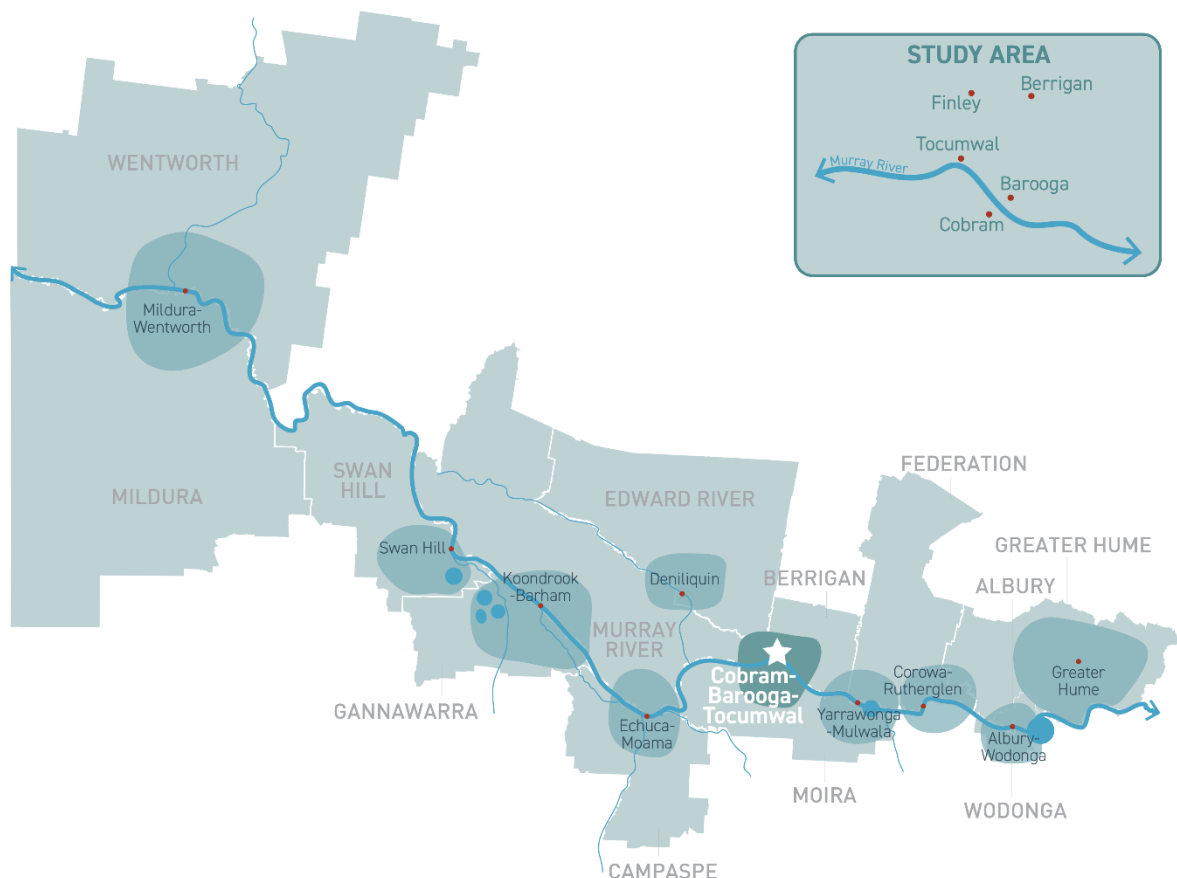
Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) and Destination Riverina Murray (DRM) have prepared Local Area Plans (Plan) for 10 of the Murray region’s prominent destinations, as shown in the map below.

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 Cobram, Barooga, Tocumwal and surrounds. 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 17 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 Cobram, Barooga, Tocumwal and surrounds 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 year¹, in order to reflect a business-as-usual scenario prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

OVERVIEW

Cobram, Barooga, Tocumwal and surrounds attracts an average of 1 million visitors, accounting for 16% of total visitation to the Murray region. Visitors to this destination generate approximately \$251 million in visitor expenditure, majority of which is generated in Moira Shire, noting Yarrawonga is included in the destination.

Overnight visitors to this destination account for 51% of overall visitation and contribute \$196 million to expenditure (78%). Overnight visitors to Berrigan Shire are spending well below the average overnight visitor spend for the Murray region (\$298 per visitor to Berrigan Shire).

This destination attracts 498,000 overnight visitors who generate \$54 million in visitor spend. Daytrip visitors are low yielding in comparison to the Murray region average. Visitors to Moira Shire are spending just above the average for the Murray region.

DOMESTIC VISITOR PROFILE

Visitors to this destination are primarily travelling for holiday and leisure purposes, accounting for 52% of daytrip visitors and 54% of overnight visitors. There is also a high proportion of visitors travelling to visit their friends and relatives, accounting for 27% of daytrip visitors and 34% of overnight visitors.

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

Visitors engage in a variety of activities when visiting this destination, primarily dining out at restaurants and cafes.

A large proportion of visitors to this destination are engaging in passive activities, including VFR, general sightseeing, swimming and visiting National/State Parks. These activities are generally low yielding and contribute to the overall low visitor spend in the destination.

Visitors to this destination primarily originate from Victoria, accounting for 78% of daytrip visitors and 80% of overnight visitors. Visitors from NSW make up a smaller proportion of visitors to this destination, 22% of daytrip and 12% of overnight visitors. There is opportunity to attract greater visitation from New South Wales.

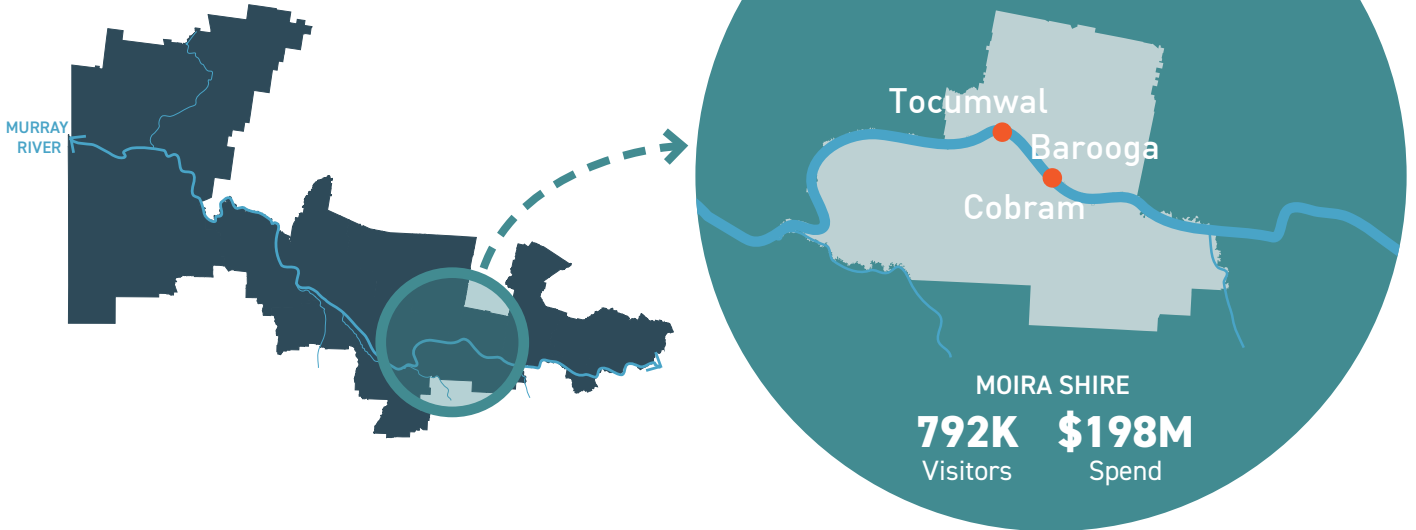
¹ Source: TRA. Visitor numbers, TRA, 2019, based on 2017-19 3 year average. Average spend per visitor, TRA LGA Profile, 2019, based on 2016-19 4 year average. Total spend, calculated by Urban Enterprise, average spend applied to visitor numbers.

VISITOR ECONOMY OVERVIEW

COBRAM, BAROOGA, TOCUMWAL AND SURROUNDS

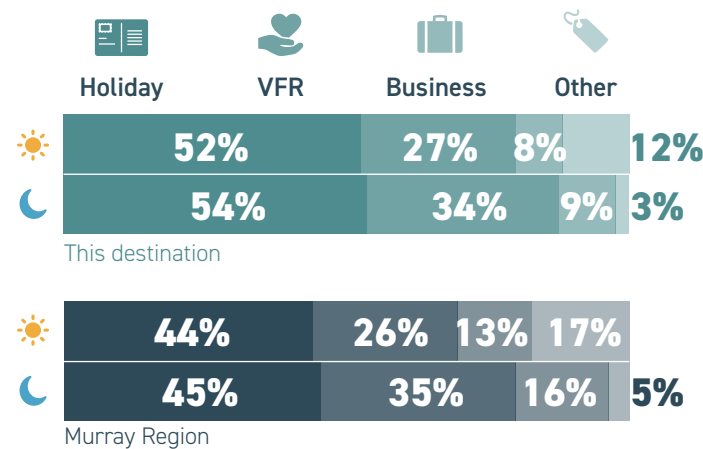
Based on Tourism Research Australia (TRA) data for Berrigan and Moira Shire Councils, which form this destination.

This destination ■
Murray Region ■

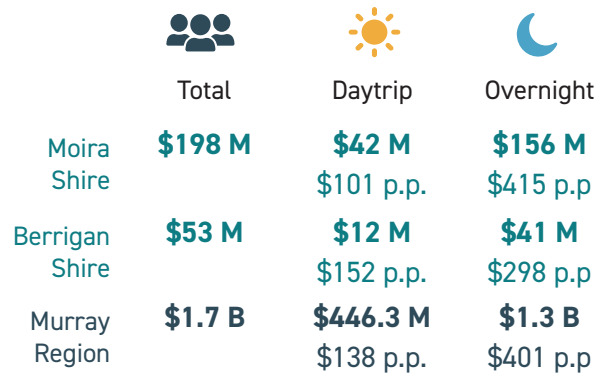


DOMESTIC VISITOR PROFILE

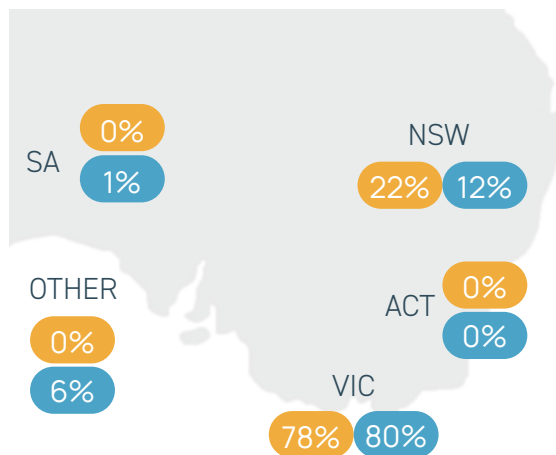
PURPOSE OF VISIT



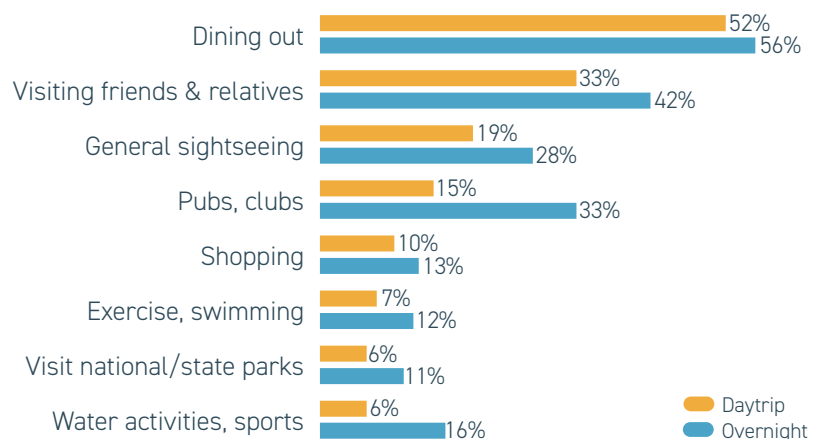
VISITOR SPEND



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 market's 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 Cobram, Barooga, Tocumwal and surrounds and Reason for Target				
Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Weak
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-sufficient travellers who typically self-cater and stay in holiday homes, caravan parks or free camping. - Stay for long trips during peak periods. - Travel in large groups, typically family groups, friend groups or multi-generational family groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High overlap in characteristics with Murray Habituals, but don't regularly visit or have a strong allegiance to the region. - Seek a relaxing nature-based experience away from the hustle and bustle of town. - Camping and caravanning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel for longer periods than other segments - opportunity to increase yield and length of stay. - Most likely to travel midweek and off peak – assist in reducing seasonality. - Opportunity for dispersal across the region as open to exploring all the Murray region's destinations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The largest market segment, predominately Millennials, not yet fully captured by the Murray region. - Young and open to new experiences, most likely to engage in a diverse range of experiences. - Want to pack their trip with activities and experiences - a key opportunity to increase visitor yield. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Critical market opportunity to grow visitor yield and support investment in more boutique offerings. - Attracted to food and wine, so growth in this sector is an opportunity to support local producers. - A shift in the perception of Murray region destinations.

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

A high proportion of the Australian market have never heard of Cobram-Barooga (43%) and Tocumwal (55%). Poor awareness may be related to the fragmented brands which lack association to place names, as well as need for additional products and experiences to motivate visitation.

Further to this, a small proportion of the Australian market have heard of Cobram-Barooga (28%) or Tocumwal (19%) and have interest in visiting. This presents as an opportunity to grow demand through the development of contemporary products, events and targeted marketing activities.

T2. AWARENESS OF DESTINATIONS IN THE MURRAY

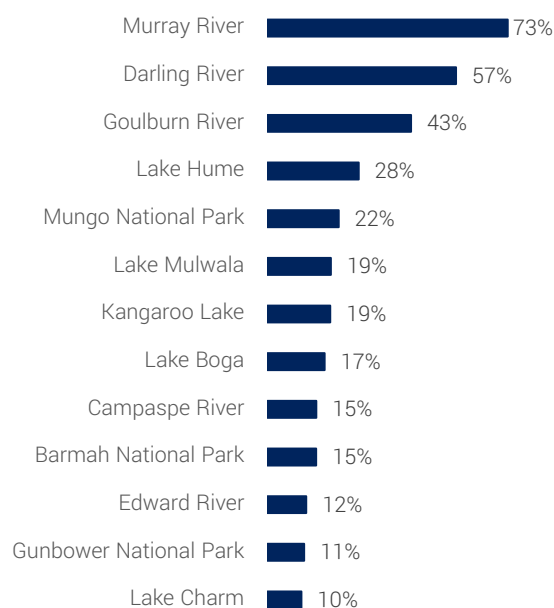
Destination	I have heard the name and have interest in visiting	I have never heard of this place
Albury Wodonga	29%	23%
Cobram-Barooga	28%	43%
Cohuna	21%	55%
Corowa-Wahgunyah	23%	50%
Deniliquin	26%	39%
Echuca-Moama	26%	35%
Holbrook	23%	49%
Koondrook-Barham	19%	60%
Mildura	38%	12%
Rutherglen	24%	47%
Swan Hill	36%	22%
Tocumwal	19%	55%
Wentworth	31%	33%
Yarrawonga-Mulwala	23%	47%

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

Amongst Murray region nature-based assets, the Murray River has the highest levels of awareness within the Australian market (73%). This 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. For this destination, the proximity to Barmah National Park and the naturally occurring inland beaches are a comparative advantage that could be strengthened.

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	Emerging Strengths
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 adjacent 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%).

Large-scale food production is a significant economic driver for the region, with a growing number of experiences showcasing the regions local produce, such as Rich Glen Providore, Manto Providore and Murray Farm Gate Trail. There is further opportunity to leverage and showcase the food production in the region through investment in food and dining experiences such as providores, farm gates and food trails, and increased use of local produce in cafes and restaurants.

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

Cobram, Barooga, Tocumwal and the surrounding towns are an emerging destination on the Murray River. The destination has foundations in place to become a strong visitor destination, however significant investment in contemporary products and experiences is needed to attract new visitor markets.

Product strengths within this destination include:

- High-quality nature-based experiences, including an abundance of wildlife and river red gums, as well as assets such as Barmah National Park.
- Sandy beaches are prolific in the area and provide an important recreation and camping asset for visitors to the region.
- Golf, recreation and clubs.
- Heritage streetscapes.
- Agritourism including the Murray Farm Gate Trail touring routes.
- Aviation tourism and events, including the Tocumwal Air Show and the Australian National Gliding Multi Class Championship.
- A broad range of tourism events and festivals, including golf tournaments and live music events (e.g. Strawberry Fields).

Cobram, Barooga, Tocumwal and Surrounds Unique Selling Proposition (USP) within the Murray Region

Cobram, Barooga, Tocumwal and the surrounding region offer a uniquely tranquil Murray region experience, with natural, sandy in-land beaches, riverside camping and paddling experiences located adjacent to quaint holiday towns.



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 products and experiences on offer within the destination, including the development of unique food and accommodation experiences. Opportunities include:

- **Further development of agritourism, leveraging off of the scale and diversity of food production in the region.**
- **Further activation and connection to the river and natural assets including river cruising, indigenous experiences and tours.**
- **Development of aviation tourism, including events, visitor experiences such as adventure flights, and other experiences building on the strength of aviation in the region.**

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.

In order to develop a strong cross-border destination, collaboration between the two Councils should continue to be a priority where possible, particularly through development of a shared vision and goals for the visitor economy.

T3. GOVERNANCE OVERVIEW

Organisation	Overview	Activities
Destination NSW	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"> • Destination marketing. • Industry support and engagement. • Industry training. • Product development.
Visit Victoria	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"> • Destination marketing. • Industry support and engagement. • Industry training. • Product development.
Office of the NSW Cross-Border Commissioner	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"> • Advocacy. • Industry support.
Victoria's Cross Border Commissioner	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"> • Advocacy. • Industry support.
Department of Regional NSW	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"> • Regional Economic Development Plans. • Regional Event funding. • Tourism Infrastructure Funding. • Regional Investment support. • Regional strategic planning.

Organisation	Overview	Activities
Murray Regional Tourism	The Regional Tourism Board and peak tourism organisation for the Murray region in NSW and Victoria. 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination marketing. • Industry support and engagement. • Product development. • Investment attraction and facilitation.
Destination Riverina Murray	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy • Product development. • Industry training. • Industry support and engagement. • Investment attraction and facilitation.
Local Government <i>Moirra and Berrigan Shire Councils</i>	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor services. • Destination marketing. • Investment attraction/facilitation. • Industry training. • Product development.
Finley Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture Inc.	The Finley Chamber of Commerce actively supports and promotes businesses and industries within Finley. The Chamber promotes local events, as well as attractions, through their website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event promotion. • Visitor services. • Online local directory. • Advocacy. • Industry support.
Cobram, Barooga Business and Tourism	The Cobram Barooga Business and Tourism organisation is a community-based organisation that supports local businesses and tourism industry, as well as hosting events that increase tourism to Cobram and Barooga.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Gift Card. • Cobram Barooga Destination App. • Destination marketing.
Berrigan and District Development Association	The Berrigan and District Development Association is a membership-based organisation that represents and promotes local businesses within the Berrigan region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event promotion. • Local Business Directory. • Destination promotion.
Tocumwal Chamber of Commerce and Tourism	The Chamber strives to advocate, network and educate the town's local businesses and community groups to ensure continuous improvement and growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event promotion. • Industry networking.
Barooga Advancement Group	Barooga Advancement Group is a sub-committee of Berrigan Shire Council, which acts as the local Chamber.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate the Barooga Aquatic and Recreation Centre.

Organisation	Overview	Activities
Tocumwal Foreshore Committee	The Tocumwal Foreshore Committee is a community group made up of volunteer members. The Committee manages the Tocumwal Foreshore, from the Town Beach to the Old Bridge, as well as the Tocumwal Splash Park. The Committee maintains the Foreshore with the money raised from the Foreshore Markets and Beach Camping sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land management. • Infrastructure maintenance. • Foreshore Markets.
Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation (YYNAC)	Established to represent, make decisions and act on any matters of significance to the Yorta Yorta peoples, and to enter into agreements with any person, Government agency or authority in relation to the protections of Yorta Yorta Country. Yorta Yorta Country is large area spanning a large part of northern Victoria, centred around the Murray River.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy. • Land management and protection. • Building capability, resources and education for Aboriginal people.
Local Aboriginal Land Council	Local Aboriginal Land Councils represent Aboriginal affairs at a local level and aim to protect the interests and further the aspirations of Aboriginal communities. 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land acquisition. • Establishment of commercial enterprises and community benefit schemes. • Maintenance and enhancement of Aboriginal culture, identity and heritage.

3. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The following section examines the challenges and opportunities for this destination, which has been used to inform the vision and actions for the visitor economy.

The following issues and opportunities have been identified through research and engagement with local visitor economy stakeholders, and review of Council documentation.

T4. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Markets
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visitation includes the “grey nomad” market, NSW travelling west to Adelaide and Victorians heading north to Queensland, as well as family caravan and camping travellers, particularly during school holidays.• Golf market travelling from NSW is increasing, particularly from destinations including Wagga Wagga, Griffith and Canberra.• Need to explore opportunities to grow overnight holiday visitation, as well as mid-week visitation.• Opportunity to capitalise on the large number of people driving through the destination on the Newell Highway.• Opportunity to capture travellers from Adelaide to Victorian ski fields for a few days on their journey over.• Opportunity to provide golf touring packages for overseas markets, including Asian markets.• Attract greater visitation from the nature-based visitor market, through promotion of national parks and other nature-based assets including river beaches.• Family market continued focus for the region, however, need to improve product that engages with this market.• Opportunity to grow the meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) market.• Opportunity to further enhance aviation tourism products and experiences to capture the aviation tourism market.
Product, Experience and Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of food and beverage available on weekends and in evenings due to limited operating hours.• Opportunity to capitalise on the scale and diversity of food production in the region. This is yet to be fully realised as a product to attract new visitors to the region.• Opportunity to offer agri-tourism experiences, such as farm-stays, paddock to plate dining and glamping.• Opportunity to become accredited for stargazing by the Astronomical Society of Australia.• Opportunity to explore aviation tourism experiences in Tocumwal, drawing on the strength of the Tocumwal Aviation Museum.• Opportunity to educate locals and visitors on the benefits of the Murray River during high tides – shift the perception that it is an inconvenience due to closed trail but an opportunity to explore waterways on canoe/kayaks.• Lack of contemporary products and experiences for the “plus ones” on golf trips who don’t play golf.• An expanded product and experience offering is required to encourage longer stay and higher yield stopover visitation.
Accommodation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need for commercial accommodation that meets contemporary visitor expectations.• Lack of high-end accommodation to service visitors during peak periods.• Opportunity to offer boutique, nature-based and experiential accommodation to meet the needs of the contemporary visitor, including glamping, eco-cabins and farm-stays.
Infrastructure and Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need for investment in amenity and infrastructure to benefit the local community, increase the attractiveness of towns, and encourage greater stop-over visitation.• Need to activate water-front areas at the Murray River, including Thompson’s Beach.• Need to address poor telecommunication and data coverage.

Brand, Marketing and Visitor Servicing

- A need to continue to educate local residents. Residents and locals are generally unaware of what there is to do within the region, therefore there is a lack of knowledge to share with visiting friends and relatives.
- Lack of visitor information/presence online to spark interest in the destination.
- Reputation as a "cheap" golf getaway.
- Need for greater digital presence of businesses and improved online visitor servicing, including up to date information such as operation hours.
- Unclear brand/identity to unify the destination.
- Opportunity to continue to provide pre-prepared itineraries or touring routes to encourage travel between towns.

Industry Development and Workforce

- Skilled staff shortages are a barrier to investment within the destination.
 - Encourage networking and collaboration between tourism operators.
 - Lack of accommodation to support attraction and retention of workforce.
 - Educate operators and owners on the collective benefit on remaining open during long weekends, and public holidays.
-

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
 - Public Transport Victoria
 - Goulburn Murray Water
 - Murray-Darling Basin Authority
- Local Government agencies, including:
 - Berrigan Shire Council (Berrigan SC)
 - Moira Shire Council (Moira SC)
- Industry

4.1. PRODUCT, EXPERIENCE AND EVENTS

T5. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p>Bullanginya Art Walk Development Activate the Bullanginya Art Walk to elevate the arts and culture offering in this destination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake the construction of the Bullanginya Art Walk, including the consolidating and redevelopment of existing nature based attractions. 	<p>Berrigan SC Industry MRT DRM</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Cruising Experience Investment Refer to the Murray Cruising Strategy for key project opportunities. Specific needs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water equipment hire locations - Paddle sports hubs - Fishing tours - Water taxi service model and feasibility study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council and stakeholders to facilitate cruising investment. - Work with existing cruise operators to elevate offering and address barriers to operation. 	<p>MRT DRM Industry Councils GMW MDBA</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Registered Star Gazing Site Establish a site to be nominated for consideration by the Astronomical Society of Australia as a 'Designated Observatory'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify opportunity to establish a registered star gazing site. 	<p>Councils</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Signature Events Calendar Review of current events calendar across the two Councils, as well as focusing on supporting the development of new signature events, including golf tournaments and tourism events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the events calendar and seek to provide funding to support new signature events that strengthen the destination brand. 	<p>Councils Industry</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Food and Drink Activation Support attraction of food and beverage establishments to activate towns and provide contemporary experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake investment attraction of dining and beverage businesses across the region. 	<p>Councils Industry</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Waterway Enhancement Activate waterways across the Murray Region. Opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cobram to Tocumwal Beaches Cruise - Foraging Food Cruise - Paddle sports hub - Canoe/kayak river cruise tours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a study which audits and identifies required moorings, jetties, fishing platforms and marinas across the Murray River. - This should include identification and design and consider private and public sector cruising opportunities. 	<p>Councils Industry</p>	<p>Short term</p>

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
Wellness Experience Development			
Strengthen wellness product to compliment other experiences and provide a rounded visitor experiences and target higher yielding markets. This includes: - Day spas - Massage - Retreats	- Undertake a gap analysis for wellness products in the region and identify opportunities for investment.	Councils	Short term
Kennedy Park and Thompsons Beach Development			
Further activate Kennedy Park and Thompsons Beach for visitors and events, including the National Beach Volleyball Championships.	- Seek funding for Kennedy Park and Thompsons Beach Masterplan.	Councils MRT DRM	Short term
Murray River Festival of Golf			
Expand and improve the Murray River Festival of Golf.	- Undertake a strategic action plan for expansion and improvement of the Murray River Festival of Golf.	Berrigan SC Industry MRT DRM	Short term
"On Farm" Experiences			
Promote local produce by supporting development of farm open days, on-farm experiences and farm gates, and paddock to plate dining experiences.	- MRT to share agri-tourism research and recommendations with industry through further engagement with the sector. - Continue to grow and expand the Murray Farm Gate Trail and implement the Paddock to Plate plan.	Local producers MRT DRM	Medium term
Murray Winter Night Time Events			
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. There is opportunity to create an event that is unique to the region, leveraging from the River Red Gum setting.	- MRT to support the development and promotion of events. - Councils to allocate funding to local event. - Work with Traditional Owners and private operators to develop the event concept and program. - Identify grant opportunities and seek funding from state government agencies to support the event.	MRT DRM Industry Councils	Long term
Aviation Tourism Development Plan			
Work with Tocumwal Aviation Museum and others to explore aviation tourism opportunities.	- Establish aviation working group and identify opportunities.	Berrigan Shire Council Industry MRT DRM	Short term

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
Accommodation Investment			
Refer to the Murray Region Accommodation Study for project details to attract investment in the identified priority projects:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yielima Station Farm stay and Indigenous Experience, Barmah National Park. - Cobram Barooga Golf Club Accommodation Redevelopment, Barooga. - Barmah Forest Eco Retreat (Yorta Yorta). - The Paddock, Ulupna. - Tourist park refurbishments. - Experiential accommodation. - Nature-based accommodation. - Reinvestment in motels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council should facilitate investment by identifying suitable sites, with consideration of suitable zoning / need for rezoning. - Promote the opportunity to a developer and facilitate planning process. 	Industry Councils	Ongoing
		Councils	
		MRT	
		DRM	Ongoing
		Parks Vic	
		NPWS	
Murray River Adventure Trail			
Plan and deliver the Murray River Adventure trail from Cobram Barooga to Tocumwal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a feasibility study and business case for the Cobram Barooga to Tocumwal section of MRAT. 		

4.2. INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING

T6. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p>Electric Vehicle Charging Plan</p> <p>Work with industry to establish EV charging points across the destination, including in suitable public locations, within accommodation facilities and at other major attractions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify potential locations for EV charging points and work with stakeholders to facilitate delivery. 	<p>Councils</p> <p>State Government</p> <p>Industry</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Access and Transport Advocacy</p> <p>The public transport linkages and road infrastructure for access to this destination are poor. This impacts on the ability for workers and visitors to access the town.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake population and visitation modelling to provide a case for public transport links and road upgrades. 	<p>PTV</p> <p>VicRoads</p> <p>Transport for NSW</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p>Advocacy for Infrastructure Servicing</p> <p>Advocate for services infrastructure investment to allow new development and business investment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobile network and coverage/NBN. - Sewerage and water capacity where required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocate to servicing authorities to deliver required infrastructure. 	<p>Servicing authorities</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p>Shuttle Bus</p> <p>There is a need to establish a shuttle bus service which operates between key townships and other locations to service the visitor economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocate for funding for a shuttle bus. - Seek collaboration between industry and Council to deliver the service as needed. 	<p>Industry</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Long term</p>
<p>Wharves and Mooring Infrastructure</p> <p>Work with State Government Agencies (e.g. GMW, MDBA, NSW Maritime Services) to improve access to the waterfront for commercial vessels and passengers. Opportunities as identified in the Murray Region Cruising Strategy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of a new Tocumwal Foreshore wharf to support canoeing/kayaking and expansion of commercial operations. - Commercial mooring infrastructure at Tocumwal and Cobram, including up to 5 permanent moorings to support private operators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investigate opportunities to deliver / support delivery of wharf and mooring infrastructure. 	<p>Industry</p> <p>NSW Maritime Services</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Long term</p>
<p>Advocacy to Address Housing Crisis</p> <p>Continued advocacy to State and Federal Government to address housing crisis to support industry growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MRT and Councils to work with regional stakeholders to quantify housing needs and support delivery of programs to meet required demand. 	<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>Bookable Product and Packaging</p> <p>There are limited online bookable products within this destination. This presents an opportunity to increase length of stay and improve visitor experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop bookable product and product packages including accommodation and dining packages. 	<p>Industry</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Cross-Border Brand Strategy</p> <p>Review of the existing brands, such as Sun Country on the Murray, and development of a brand strategy that unifies the two Councils.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a cross border strategy. 	<p>Councils</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Cross-Border Marketing Plan</p> <p>Prepare a Cobram, Barooga, Tocumwal and Surrounds Marketing Plan with consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targeted social media to certain demographics. - Digital advertising. - Opportunities to leverage MRT cooperative marketing activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver a marketing plan with consideration of digital marketing. 	<p>Councils</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Visitor Information Review and Delivery</p> <p>Undertake a cross-border visitor information and signage review to ensure consistency, building on the success of the Moira Shire Visitor Information Points (VIPs).</p> <p>Prepare a strategy to deliver the following needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signage (wayfinding and tourism). - Gateway enhancements and interventions. - Physical collateral. - Visitor information touchpoints (i.e. VIPs) throughout the visitor journey, including digital screens. - Digital enhancements, including online chat function and digital training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a visitor information services review. - Work collaboratively to implement the findings of the review. 	<p>Councils</p> <p>Regional Roads Vic</p> <p>Transport for NSW</p>	<p>Medium term</p>

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p>Murray Region Local Ambassador Project</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.</p> <p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incentive system for residents and industry to engage in tourism offerings and promote through social media. - MRT branded business swap card system to encourage cross-business promotion and visitor information. - Local area tourism industry communication framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MRT to develop and deliver plan. - Councils to deliver actions at local level. This should include expansion of the following Moira Shire initiatives: Dollar Discovery weekend and Local Tourist Passport. 	<p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>Industry</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

4.4. INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE

T8. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
Regional Workforce Pathways and Promotion Program			
MRT to develop and implement a framework that promotes the attractiveness of the tourism industry and attracts new workforce. The program should be twofold:		MRT	
- 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.	DRM Councils	Short term and Ongoing
- Development of pathways program to attract and retain staff, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Attraction of secondary students o Offer training and education o Communication of clear progression pathways within and between business o Encouraging use of staff sharing platform to provide consistency of work. 	- MRT to work with local Councils and other stakeholders (jobs boards, LLENs etc) to promote opportunities.	Secondary schools Higher education Employment networks	
Skills Development Plan			
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
Governance			
Undertake an industry governance review for the broader region to identify an improved approach for industry collaboration, branding and marketing.	- Deliver governance review.	Councils Industry	Long term
Digital Literacy for Operators			
Improve the capability of operators to utilise online visitor services, such as online booking services, social media and motivational websites.	- Deliver a digital literacy program for industry.	MRT DRM Councils	Ongoing

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p>Networking and Capacity Building</p> <p>Ensure the tourism industry is well-connected and supported through the development of networking opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Host a bi-annual networking event for industry collaboration opportunities. 	<p>Industry</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Encourage Weekend Trading</p> <p>There is a need to address the very limited trading hours of businesses within the region, including restaurants, cafes and retail stores. This includes encouraging businesses to extend trading hours when major events are occurring in the region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with retail and hospitality businesses to encourage longer weekend trading hours during events, as a first step in extending trading hours. 	<p>Industry</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Murray Regional Tourism

- 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

Berrigan Shire Council

- Berrigan Shire Strategy for the Visitor Economy 2022-2026

Moira Shire Council

- Moira Shire Tourism Plan 2022-2026
- Moira Shire Visitor Services Strategy 2017-2019
- Moira Shire Economic Development Strategy 2019-2023
- Moira Shire Arts and Culture Strategy 2020-2026

Additional Documents

- River Red-Gum Management Plan
- Barmah National Park Management Plan and Joint Management Plan

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