



MEDIA RELEASE

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**Future-proofing our region:
Destination Management Plan launched for Eastern Murray Region**

By the year 2031 the Murray region aims to increase tourism by 44.4 per cent – by 2.4 million overnight and day trip visitors to a total of 7.8 million visitors – and the new Destination Management Plan for Murray Regional Tourism provides the blueprint to secure this growth and economic vibrancy for the Eastern Murray region.

Taking in the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Greater Hume, Albury and Wodonga, the Eastern Murray region offers visitors rich experiences across river-based, food, wine and produce, fishing, festivals and events, history and heritage, nature-based and business events.

MRT is the only Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) in Australia that includes areas within two states, Victoria and New South Wales, and is responsible for providing overarching tourism strategy for the Murray Region.

Wendy Greiner, Chair of Murray Regional Tourism, said that tourism to the Murray region in 2017 accounted for 19.9 per cent of total employment, attracting 5.4 million visitors (day trip and overnight) and \$2.9 billion in visitor expenditure (direct and indirect).

“Our region and our partners have been successful in growing tourism over the past six years by 623,000 visitors and \$339 million in visitor expenditure, with an additional \$372 million in tourism-related projects and over 4,500 direct and indirect jobs,” she said.

“Today, with the launch of our 2018 Destination Management Plan, we embark on the next phase in the Murray region’s tourism growth. The Plan sets a series of infrastructure, product and experience priorities to ensure that we continue to thrive and grow, and I look forward to working with the State Governments of Victoria and NSW, with Destination Riverina Murray, the 13 local government authorities, and with the tourism sector and communities that are united by the Murray, to deliver on the potential identified in the Plan,” Ms Greiner added.

The Victorian Minister for Tourism and Major Events, John Eren said, “The Murray River’s popularity as a holiday destination has grown enormously in recent years, a result of the region’s diverse strengths as well as the continued focus and consultative, cross-border approach of Murray Regional Tourism.”

“I look forward to seeing the region continue to develop under this new Destination Management Plan, and I am confident that the clear and strategic vision outlined, along with the strong leadership of Murray Regional Tourism, will deliver even more success for the Murray region and the communities it supports,” he said.

The NSW Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Adam Marshall said, “Tourism is vital to the people of the Murray River. It injects billions of dollars into local economies, and provides nearly 20 per cent of local jobs.

“The NSW Government recognises the significant tourism gains made in recent years and central to this success has been the unique cross-border collaboration between the Murray River communities.

"I am excited about the delivery of the Murray Region Destination Management Plan and the even brighter future it heralds for tourism along the Murray," he said.

Priority projects for the Eastern Murray region targeted under the Destination Management Plan include:

- Albury Entertainment Centre Expansion and Convention Facilities: investigations are currently underway to determine if capacity can be increased to 600+ and additional exhibition/breakout spaces created, to attract more events, business events and tourism;
- Albury Airport Improvements and Visitor Welcome Facilities: development in accordance with the Masterplan, improving regional branding, welcome and farewell signage as well as improved signage to the Airport, and the addition of a digital activities kiosk at the Airport showcasing the regional offer to provide increased tourist amenity and promote Murray region tourism experiences;
- Albury Riverside Precinct: Establishment of a significant Riverside Precinct and major parks upgrade close to Albury CBD, a key element of the Murray River Experience and enhancing the region's nature-based tourism appeal;
- Wonga Wetlands Recreation Development: A mountain bike course, boardwalk, all abilities trail network and visitor centre as part of staged investment in the Wonga Wetlands Recreation Development Masterplan;
- Murray River Experience Masterplan: A review of this 2006 Masterplan, specifically those elements not yet funded or implemented, with the recent Two Cities One Community partnership between Albury City and City of Wodonga offering opportunity to extend into Victoria;
- Hume Passenger Rail Corridor: improving the service frequency, journey time and reliability to support forecast tourism growth;
- Greater Hume Museum Trail Reinvestment: identifying the priorities and reinvestment into the 11 museums across Greater Hume, including the opportunity to develop a heritage town touring route;
- Albury Wodonga Sports Infrastructure Investment: continued investment in sporting infrastructure to keep pace with population growth and tourism potential, with major projects including Lavington Sports Ground, Lauren Jackson Centre, and Albury Wodonga Aquatic Complex, Baranduda Fields;
- Wodonga CBD Development: the CBD development, led by Development Victoria, including opportunities for accommodation, entertainment complex, conference, and market facility development in planning stage, with the development to support growth in the business, events and visiting friends and relatives tourism segments;
- Bonegilla Migrant Experience Stage 2: Execution of Stage 2 upgrades under the Masterplan including further restoration works, educational centre, chapel and rail stop, to tap into the growing tourism market tracing ancestry and heritage, and history and heritage tourism; and
- Gateway Island Tourism Precinct: the development of Gateway Island for tourism experiences, with a masterplan in development to identify opportunities including new attractions, upgrading trail network, and events infrastructure.

The Murray Regional Tourism Destination Management Plan can be downloaded from www.murrayregionaltourism.com.au

Murray Regional Tourism works in partnership with Visit Victoria, Destination New South Wales, Destination Riverina Murray and 13 local government areas and tourism associations to drive the development of the tourism industry within the region and acknowledges the funding support for this project from our partners.

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