

FEBRUARY 2023



# KOONDROOK-BARHAM 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.



L1 302-304 Barkly St, Brunswick VIC 3056  
+61 3 9482 3888 [urbanenterprise.com.au](http://urbanenterprise.com.au)

## AUTHORS

Mike Ruzzene  
Agathy Patsouris  
Alana Grollo

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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
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

<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 (2023-2027) (available [here](#)) and the NSW Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan (2023-2030). 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 Koondrook-Barham and surrounds. This includes the destinations in proximity, as described in Section 1.**

## ANNUAL VISITOR ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

444K

Visitors

\$99M

Spend

## UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION WITHIN THE MURRAY REGION

Gunbower National Park, the RAMSAR accredited wetlands and the immersive river redgum experience are unique to this destination. The towns of this destination are set into the red gum forests and are hubs for nature-based and wildlife experiences.



## 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>• Gunbower Island Nature Based Activation Plan</li> <li>• Waterfront Food, Drink and Entertainment Activation</li> <li>• "On Farm" Experiences</li> <li>• Gunbower Indigenous Experience Development Plan</li> <li>• Continued Development of the Moulamein Heritage Precinct</li> <li>• Koondrook Butter Factory Arts Precinct and Murray River Brewery</li> <li>• Murray Winter Night time Events Series</li> <li>• Accommodation Investment</li> <li>• Murray River Adventure Trail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Koondrook Wharf</li> <li>• Cohuna Streetscaping</li> <li>• Kerang-Koondrook Rail Trail</li> <li>• Access and Transport Advocacy</li> <li>• Infrastructure Servicing</li> <li>• Kerang Regional Park</li> <li>• Advocacy to Address Housing Crisis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bookable Product and Packaging</li> <li>• Cross-Border Brand Use Action Plan</li> <li>• Cross-Border Marketing Plan</li> <li>• Visitor Information Review and Delivery</li> <li>• Murray Region Local Ambassador Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary Workforce Accommodation</li> <li>• Regional Workforce Pathways and Promotion Program</li> <li>• Skills Development Plan</li> <li>• Digital Literacy for Operators</li> <li>• Encourage Extended Weekend Trading</li> <li>• Capacity Building and Networking</li> </ul>

# 1. KOONDROOK-BARHAM AND SURROUNDS LOCAL AREA PLAN

## 1.1. THIS PROJECT

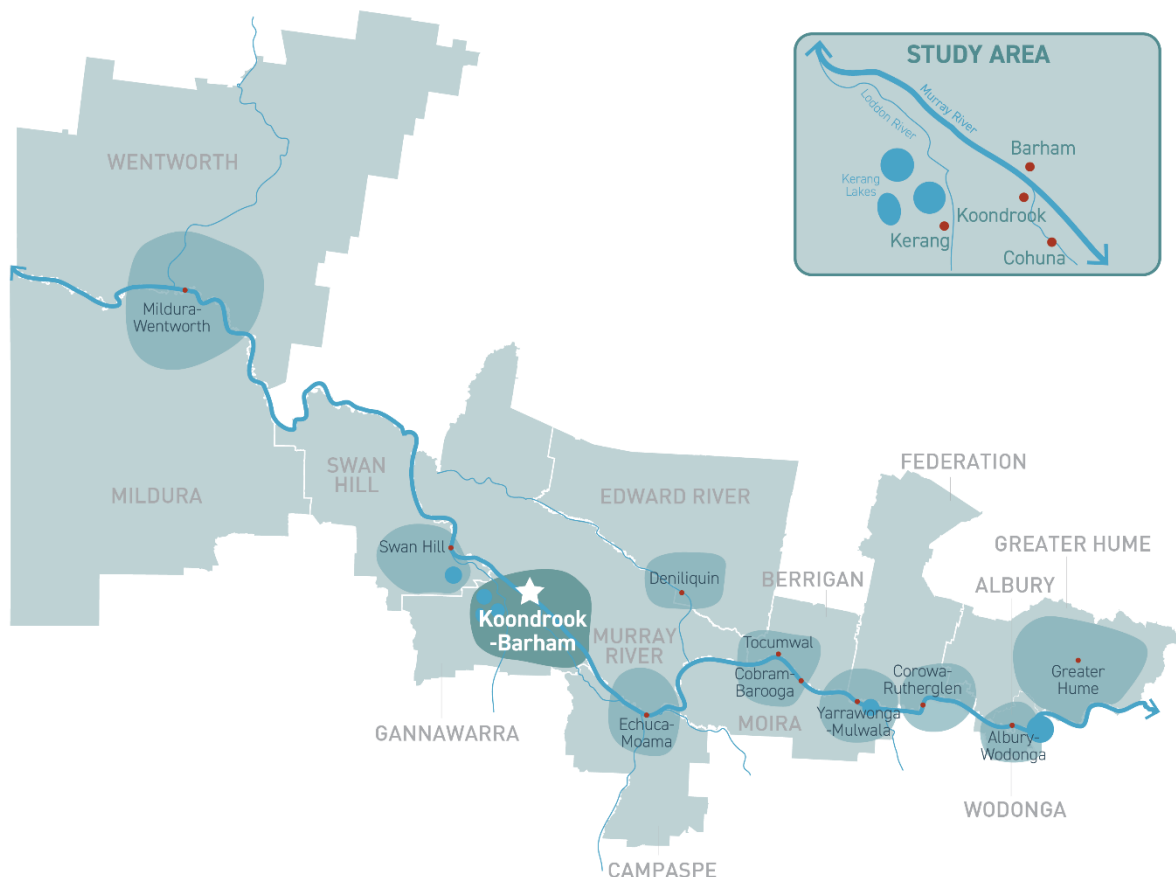
Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) and Destination Riverina Murray (DRM) have prepared Local Area Plans (Plan) for 10 of the Murray region’s prominent destinations, as shown in the map below.

These are strategic documents that capture local aspirations and directions at a high-level to inform the Murray Region Destination Management Plan (DMP) (2023-2027) and the NSW Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan (2023-2030). 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 Koondrook-Barham 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 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 10 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 Koondrook-Barham 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 year<sup>1</sup>, in order to reflect a business-as-usual scenario prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

#### OVERVIEW

The Koondrook-Barham and surrounds visitor economy attracts 444,000 visitors, generating \$99 million in visitor expenditure. This accounts for 7% of overall visitation to the Murray region.

Visitors to Murray River Shire spend \$94 per person during a daytrip and \$354 per person on an overnight trip. Visitors to Gannawarra Shire spend \$84 per person during a daytrip and \$231 per person on an overnight trip.

Visitors to this destination are relatively low yield when compared to the Murray Region (\$138 per daytrip visitor and \$401 per overnight visitor). Low expenditure can be attributed to the lack of commercialised products, experiences and events that generate greater yield and attract greater visitation. An important target for this destination will be to grow the average spend of visitors closer to the average for the Murray region.

#### DOMESTIC VISITOR PROFILE

Koondrook-Barham and surrounds is primarily a holiday and leisure destination, driving 51% of daytrip and 49% of overnight visitors. Holiday leisure visitors contribute a greater proportion of visitation than the Murray region average.

This is closely followed by visiting friends and relatives (VFR), which accounts for 24% of daytrip visitation and 35% of overnight visitation.

Victoria is the largest source market for this destination, accounting for 84% of daytrip visitors and 81% of overnight visitors. Outside of Victoria, NSW accounts for 15% of daytrip and 11% of overnight visitors.

Visitors are engaging in a variety of activities whilst visiting the destination, primarily dining out at restaurants and cafes whilst visiting.

Passive activities, including VFR and general sightseeing, are generally low yielding and contribute to the overall low visitor spend in the destination.

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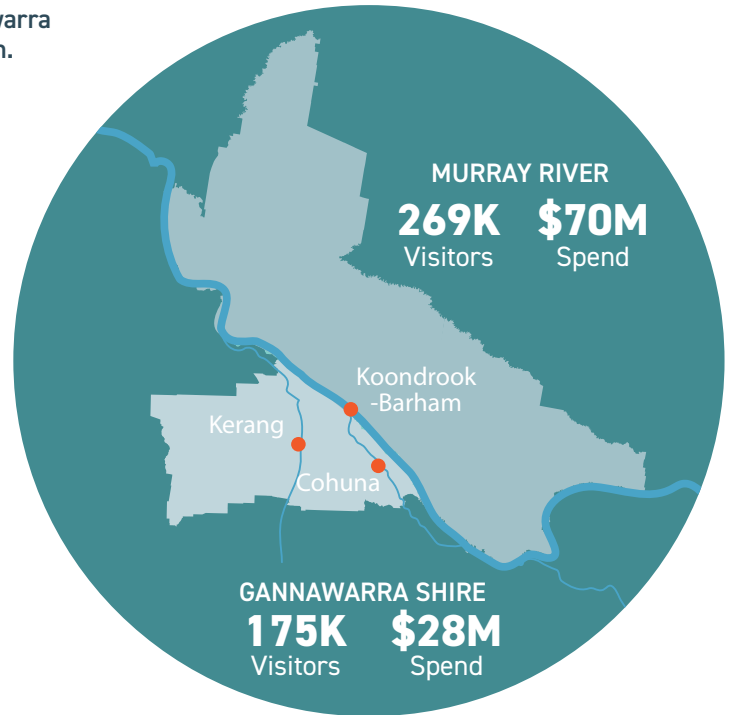
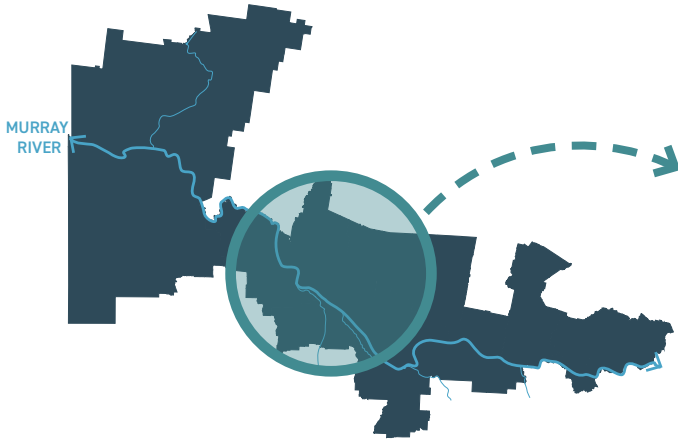
<sup>1</sup> Source: TRA, Visitor numbers, TRA, 2019, based on 2017-19 3 year average. Average spend per visitor, TRA LGA Profile, 2019, based on 2016-19 4 year average. Total spend, calculated by Urban Enterprise, average spend applied to visitor numbers.

# VISITOR ECONOMY OVERVIEW

## KOONDROOK-BARHAM AND SURROUNDS

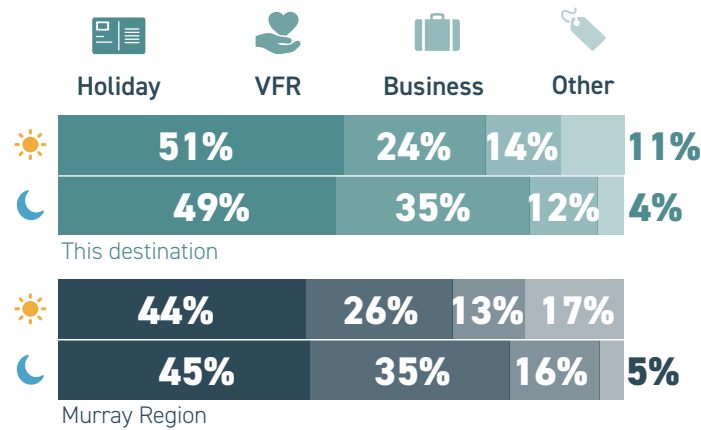
Based on Tourism Research Australia (TRA) data for Gannawarra Shire and Murray River Councils, which form this destination.

This destination ■  
Murray Region ■

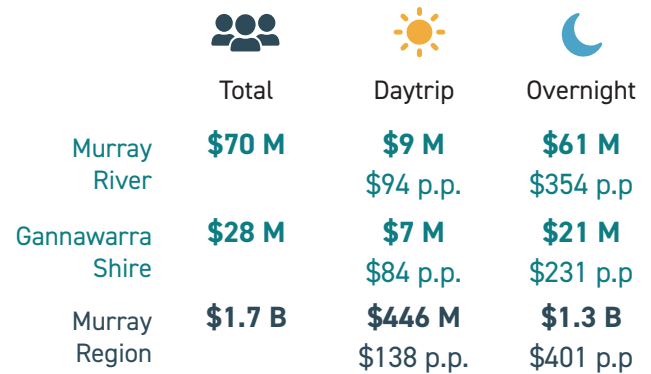


# DOMESTIC VISITOR PROFILE

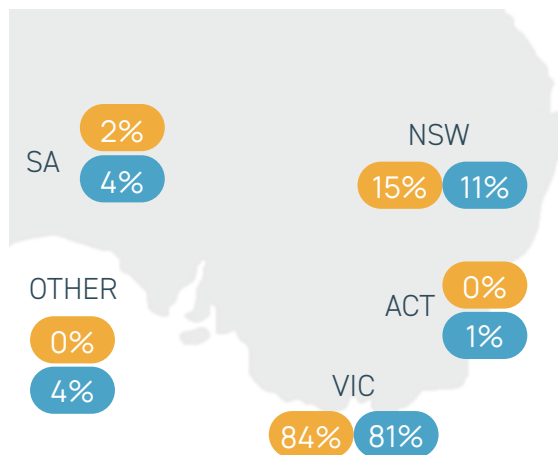
## PURPOSE OF VISIT



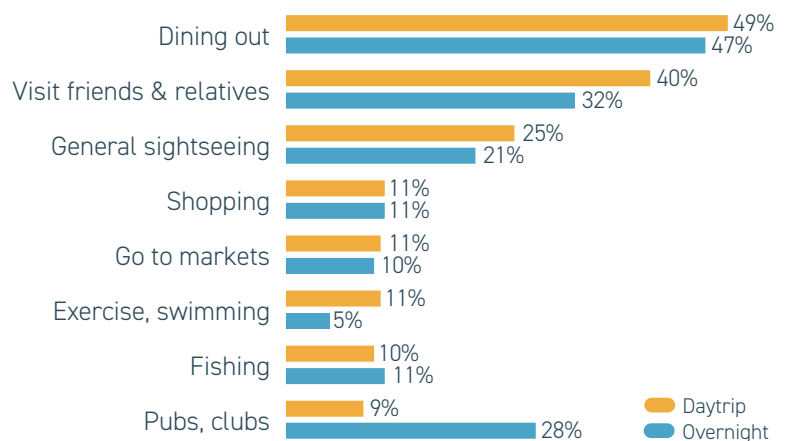
## VISITOR SPEND



## 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 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 Koondrook-Barham and Surrounds and Reason for Target				
Strong	Strong	Moderate	Low	Low
<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

**A high proportion of the Australian market have never heard of Koondrook-Barham and Cohuna (60% and 55% respectively). Only a small portion of the Australian market have heard of these destinations and have interest in visiting. This reflects the fact that the destination is in the early stages of development and has opportunity to strengthen its brand awareness through marketing and development of products and experiences to inspire visitation.**

Only a small portion of the Australian market have heard of, and have interest in visiting, Koondrook-Barham and Cohuna (19% and 21% respectively). The remainder either have visited in the past or have heard of the destination and are not interested in visiting.

This demonstrates there is major potential to grow the awareness of Koondrook-Barham and surrounds and grow motivation to visit this destination.

There is very low awareness of National Parks in the region, particularly Gunbower National Park (11%), a potential hero asset for this destination. Product and experience development and promotion will help to activate these natural assets and increase their awareness.

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.

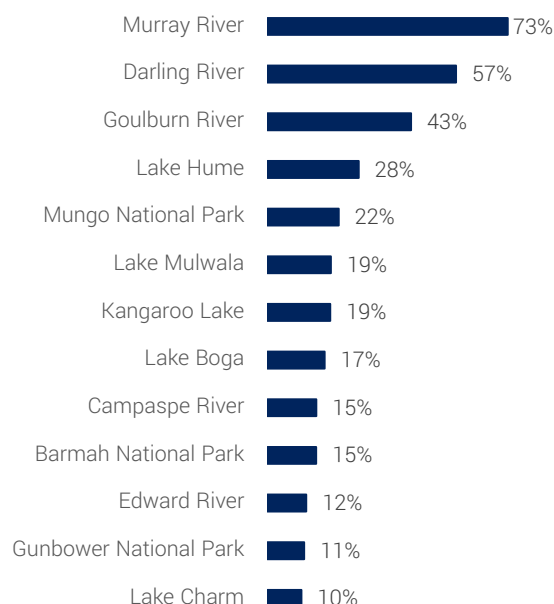
Destinations must develop hero products and experiences to differentiate themselves from the rest of the Murray region, which reinforces the potential of Gunbower National Park and State Forest.

### 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.

### 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?

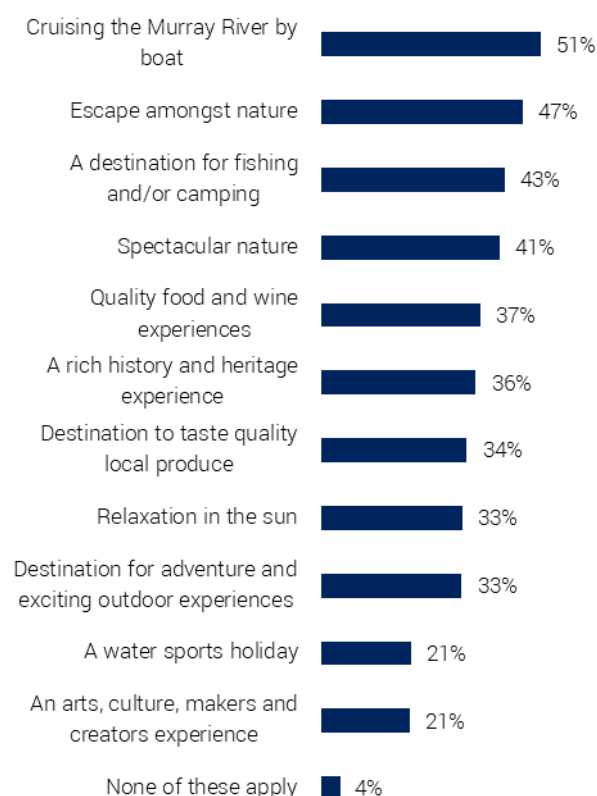
Nature-based attractions and experiences are at the core of what the Australian market perceives to be the "Murray experience".

The 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%).

The Koondrook-Barham and surrounding region aligns well with the nature-based strengths of the Murray region. Gunbower National Park and State Forest have potential to become a nature-based icon for both this destination and the Murray region more broadly.

#### 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

Koondrook-Barham and the surrounding region is an emerging Murray destination which has visitor economy foundations in terms of infrastructure, natural attractions and charming small towns, however, requires delivery of products and experiences to attract new visitation.

Product strengths of this destination include:

- High quality nature-based tourism experiences including:
  - Gunbower National Park and State Forest, as well as Gunbower Island
  - River Red Gum forests
  - RAMSAR accredited wetlands
  - Koondrook Retreat
  - Internationally recognised bird watching within wetlands
  - Abundant wildlife
- Emerging strengths in local produce and experiential eco accommodation
- Water sports and recreation including water skiing, fishing and canoeing
- Recreation, clubs and gaming in Barham

Koondrook-Barham and Surrounds Unique Selling Proposition (USP) within the Murray Region

**Gunbower National Park, the RAMSAR accredited wetlands and the immersive river redgum experience are unique to this destination. The towns of this destination are set into the red gum forests and are hubs for nature based and wildlife experiences.**

**The Gunbower National Park and State Forest connects the destination and can act as a strong visual landmark.**



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 deliver contemporary and motivating experiences within the nature-based backdrop. This can include:**

- **Deliver guided wetlands and nature-based tours.**
- **Development in keeping with the 'forest' setting.**
- **Further development of quality nature-based visitor accommodation and tourist parks.**
- **Expanded nature based, wildlife tours and cruising.**
- **Establishment of a central hub to explore the Gunbower Island.**
- **Nature based events that leverage from the Gunbower National Park and State Forest, Gunbower Creek and Murray River.**

## 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.

**At present, there is some fragmentation between Councils and local tourism and traders' associations. In order to develop a strong and sustainable destination, collaboration needs to be enhanced between the bodies to work towards a shared vision and shared goals for the destination. In particular further development and coordination of the cross-border tourism governance between Koondrook and Barham.**

### 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 (DRNSW) 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>	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"> <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>	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"> <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 Murray River and Gannawarra Shire Councils</b>	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"> <li>• Visitor services.</li> <li>• Destination marketing.</li> <li>• Investment attraction/facilitation.</li> <li>• Industry training.</li> <li>• Product development.</li> </ul>
<b>Kerang Traders Inc.</b>	A membership-based organisation that hosts an online platform for local businesses to showcase their products, services and events. The organisation encourages the local community and visitors to spend in the region through a gift-card program with local traders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-region gift-cards.</li> <li>• Industry support.</li> <li>• Online platform for local businesses.</li> </ul>
<b>Kerang Progress Association</b>	A volunteer-based organisation that advocates and represents the community and local businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry support.</li> <li>• Events and festivals.</li> <li>• Advocacy.</li> </ul>
<b>Barham Chamber</b>	Barham Chamber promotes the Koondrook-Barham region through a destination website, highlighting local events, accommodation, attractions, retail and hospitality venues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events and festivals.</li> <li>• Visitor information services.</li> </ul>
<b>Murrabit Advancement Association Inc.</b>	The Murrabit Advancement Association Inc. aims to support the community and visitor economy through events, including the Murrabit Market, as well as providing visitor information about the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events.</li> <li>• Visitor information.</li> </ul>
<b>Cohuna &amp; District Progress Association</b>	Cohuna & District Progress Association is an organisation that aims to support the visitor economy through providing visitor information and organising events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry support.</li> <li>• Events.</li> <li>• Visitor information.</li> </ul>
<b>Koondrook Development Committee</b>	A membership-based organisation that aims to promote Koondrook and surrounds, as well as host events and other entertainment experiences for visitors and locals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events and festivals.</li> <li>• Industry representation.</li> </ul>



Organisation	Overview	Activities
<b>Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation (YYNAC)</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>Yorta Yorta Country is large area spanning a large part of northern Victoria and southern New South Wales, centred around the Murray River.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy.</li> <li>• Land management and protection.</li> <li>• Building capability, resources, and education for Aboriginal people.</li> </ul>
<b>Local Aboriginal Land Council Moama</b>	<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

<b>Markets</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emerging opportunity to target nature-based tourism markets including niche activity markets including cycling, camping, canoeing.</li><li>• Product mix well suited to the older demographic.</li><li>• A need for products and experiences to attract the younger millennial market and higher value consumers.</li><li>• Opportunity to engage regular travellers in new products and experiences to increase their yield.</li><li>• Opportunity to increase mid-week visitation, through attraction of education markets.</li></ul>
<b>Product, Experience and Events</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Loss of events due to COVID-19.</li><li>• Need to harness the growing strength of the food and produce industry, including paddock to plate, provedore and farmgate opportunities.</li><li>• Difficulties are experienced trying to attract chefs and restaurateurs without a developed food culture.</li><li>• Activation of nature-based assets, including Kerang Wetlands for birdwatching and other wildlife experiences (e.g. promotion and tours), as well as Gunbower National Park and State Forest.</li><li>• Unlock the opportunities to activate Kerang Lakes. This includes opportunities to develop water sports experiences across the Lakes.</li><li>• Opportunity for Barham riverfront to host events (public land).</li><li>• Eco tourism industry development and delivery of packaged experiences.</li><li>• Opportunity to develop First Nations cultural experiences, including Pollack Swamp, given the significant history, artefacts and connection to nature and wildlife in the region.</li></ul>
<b>Accommodation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Need to match quality of nature-based experiences with quality accommodation and dining.</li><li>• Lack of medium-scale accommodation in Kerang to service visitors, as well as visitor economy workforce.</li><li>• Recently developed experiential accommodation in the destination has been successful. There is opportunity to deliver more of this style accommodation to motivate new markets to visit.</li></ul>
<b>Infrastructure and Planning</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Crown land managers around the lakes impacts the ability to develop infrastructure.</li><li>• Need caravan/large vehicle parking in Barham.</li><li>• Need a tie off area in the Gunbower Creek as the current is too fast flowing – need for a safer entry point for vessels.</li><li>• No public temporary mooring available for visitors on the Murray River.</li><li>• Townships well connected by road networks.</li><li>• Lack of public transport options makes it difficult for workers to move between townships.</li><li>• Erosion along the Murray River and Gunbower Creek can impact commercial operations and business sustainability.</li></ul>

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**Brand, Marketing and Visitor Servicing**

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- Small town focus and parochialism limiting visitor dispersal and visitor services. Need to demonstrate to locals that the strength is in numbers – proximity between towns is a strength not a hinderance.
- Need to educate locals to become ambassadors for the destination, including education for locals about the significance of tourism and flow on benefits to the economy.
- High quality in-region visitor servicing (e.g. signage infrastructure), however digital visitor servicing needs improvement to attract contemporary visitors.
- Current branding activities lack a connection to place and are unclear to visitors. This may contribute to low destination awareness.
- Councils are undertaking their own promotional ventures rather than as a destination. There is opportunity for the two Councils to consider they can use similar branding cohesively across the border.

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**Industry Development and Workforce**

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- Temporary workforce absorb short-term visitor accommodation in Kerang, which provides certainty for operators however can limit the ability to service short-term visitors.
  - Need to change mindset amongst tourism operators – working together, not competing.
  - Small, seasonal visitor base impacts viability of commercial operations.
  - Cost of compliance/red tape for tourism operators, especially those operating on the Murray River.
  - Rentals and housing accommodation stock for staff impact staff attraction and retention.
  - Leveraging younger staff to promote the products/experiences to their similar age group.
  - Education for operators on benefits of cross promotion etc.
  - Increase the professionalism and digital presence of operators.
  - Collaboration and communication between Councils is required to promote the destination.
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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:

<b>Short-term within 1 year</b>	<b>Medium-term 1-3 years</b>	<b>Long-term 4-5 years +</b>
<b>Ongoing</b>		

### 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
  - Goulburn Murray Water
  - Murray–Darling Basin Authority
  - Parks Victoria (Parks Vic)
  - NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services
  - VicRoads
  - Transport for NSW
  - Public Transport Victoria (PTV)
- Local Government agencies, including:
  - Gannawarra Shire Council (Gannawarra Shire C)
  - Murray River Council (Murray River C)
- 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 need include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Water equipment hire locations</li> <li>- Paddle sports hubs</li> <li>- Relocation of the Wetlander to operate from Koondrook/ Barham</li> <li>- Permanent moorings in Koondrook/Barham</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>Industry</p> <p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>GMW</p> <p>MDBA</p>	Short term
<p><b>Gunbower Island Nature Based Activation Plan</b></p> <p>Gunbower Island and surrounding area has potential to establish itself as one of the Murray’s iconic nature-based attractions. The wetlands, flora and fauna of the region is world leading and there is extensive opportunity to enhance the area into one of Victoria’s eco-tourism icons.</p> <p>This should include the next steps of this section of the Murray River Adventure Trail.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertake a detailed nature-based activation plan for the Gunbower Island that considers development of tracks and trails, cycling loops, wildlife watching, tours, aboriginal cultural heritage experiences and expanded visitor accommodation offer in surrounding land.</li> </ul>	<p>Gannawarra SC</p> <p>Parks Vic</p> <p>NPWS</p> <p>DELWP</p> <p>NCCMA</p>	Short term
<p><b>Waterfront Food, Drink and Entertainment Activation</b></p> <p>Support attraction of waterfront dining establishments to activate the riverfront and provide contemporary experiences. This includes attracting a food operator for the Koondrook Goods Shed, and attraction of additional contemporary food and drink businesses to Cohuna and Barham.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote the Koondrook Goods Shed opportunity.</li> <li>- Undertake investment attraction of dining and beverage businesses across the region.</li> <li>- Identify opportunities for dining experiences overlooking the Murray River.</li> </ul>	<p>Councils</p> <p>Industry</p>	Short term
<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>	Medium term

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<b>Gunbower Indigenous Experience Development Plan</b>			
Support traditional owners to develop unique indigenous cultural experiences at Gunbower National Park, State Forest and Gunbower Island, building on the strength of the existing offering such as:	- Traditional owners to lead development of experiences in Gunbower National Park, State Forest and Gunbower Island.	Parks Vic YYNAC LALC	Medium term
- Cruise and dining under the stars.			
- Cultural heritage tours integrated with on-land experience.			
<b>Continued Development of the Moulamein Heritage Precinct</b>			
Further develop the Moulamein Heritage Precinct create a unique educational experience for visitors.	- Continue to develop the Moulamein Heritage Precinct.	Murray River C Industry MRT DRM	Medium term
<b>Koondrook Butter Factory Arts Precinct and Murray River Brewery</b>			
Create a new food and beverage destination by rejuvenating a heritage site and developing a new brewery and distillery with a co-located arts and business precinct to offer brewing, coffee roasting, chocolate, food and wine, artist and artisan studios	- Further develop the concept and seek funding for delivery.	Councils Industry MRT DRM	Medium term
<b>Murray Winter Night time Events Series</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. There is opportunity to create an event that is unique to the region, leveraging from the River Red Gum setting and the Gunbower National Park and State Forest.	- 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.	Industry Councils	Long term

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<b>Accommodation Investment</b>			
Refer to the Murray Region Accommodation Study for project details to attract investment in the identified priority projects:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eco-accommodation, Gunbower Creek Cohuna.</li> <li>- Barham Luxury Riverfront Resort at former Bowls Club.</li> <li>- Self-Contained Apartments/Units, Kerang.</li> <li>- Waterfront Accommodation Development, Kerang Lakes, Lake Boga.</li> <li>- Tourist Park Upgrades, Kerang Lakes, Cohuna, Koondrook.</li> <li>- Gunbower Eco Resort.</li> <li>- Barham residential and accommodation development at Barham Lakes precinct.</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 opportunities to investors and facilitate planning process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investors</li> <li>Councils</li> </ul>	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with MRT and relevant stakeholders to develop stage one of the Murray River Adventure Trail.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councils</li> <li>MRT</li> <li>DRM</li> <li>Parks Vic</li> <li>NPWS</li> </ul>	Ongoing

## 4.2. INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING

### T6. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p><b>Koondrook Wharf</b> Koondrook Wharf was developed with funding from Government, however the precinct requires further activation in line with recommendations of the Koondrook Waterfront Masterplan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drive further tourism products from the Koondrook Wharf, including hire boats and watercraft, paddle steamers and cruise boats, weddings and hospitality businesses.</li> </ul>	<p>Gannawarra SC Industry</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p><b>Cohuna Streetscaping</b> Cohuna has substantial potential as a holiday leisure and lifestyle destination. Its streetscape however needs enhancement to reflect the potential of the destination and tie into the waterfront precinct. This should be developed inline with the redevelopment of the Cohuna waterfront precinct which has high quality landscaping and amenity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop concept plans that improve the Cohuna CBD, including connections to the Gunbower Creek.</li> <li>- Develop modern streetscapes and landscaping consistent with the local brand, as well as waterfront masterplans and strategies that attract visitors and encourage economic activity.</li> </ul>	<p>Gannawarra SC</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p><b>Kerang-Koondrook Rail Trail</b> Establish a cycling trail connecting the two towns, Kerang and Koondrook.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Utilise the work of the feasibility study to construct the Kerang to Koondrook Rail Trail.</li> </ul>	<p>Gannawarra SC</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p><b>Access and Transport Advocacy</b> The public transport linkages between Gannawarra's towns and Barham are poor. This impacts on the ability for workers to travel between towns and if delivered could also strengthen nature-based touring between Koondrook and Barham.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertake population and visitation modelling to provide a case for public transport links.</li> </ul>	<p>PTV VicRoads Transport for NSW Councils</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p><b>Infrastructure Servicing</b> Services infrastructure to allow new development and business investment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Address water pressure constraints for new development.</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 Councils</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p><b>Kerang Regional Park</b> Kerang Regional Park requires enhancement for recreation and tourism use. This will strengthen the role of Kerang as a lifestyle and holiday destination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improve walking tracks and trails and recreational infrastructure at Kerang Regional Park, building on outcomes of the Walking and Cycling Strategy currently underway.</li> </ul>	<p>Gannawarra SC Parks Vic YYNAC</p>	<p>Medium term</p>



Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p><b>Advocacy to Address Housing Crisis</b> Continued advocacy to State and Federal Government to address housing crisis.</p>	<p>- MRT and Councils to work with regional stakeholders to quantify housing needs and delivery of programs to meet required demand.</p>	<p>MRT DRM RDV DRNSW 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>Bookable Product and Packaging</b></p> <p>There are limited online bookable products in this destination. This presents an opportunity to increase visitation, length of stay and improve the overall visitor experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop bookable product and product packages including accommodation and dining packages.</li> </ul>	<p>Industry</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p><b>Cross-Border Brand Use Action Plan</b></p> <p>Review of the existing Gannawarra and Murray Branding (The Gannawarra, River Country) and development of an action plan that considers opportunities for more cohesive cross-border branding to unify the destinations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertake a cross border brand strategy.</li> </ul>	<p>Councils</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p><b>Cross-Border Marketing Plan</b></p> <p>Review current approaches to marketing and develop a new cross border marketing plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertake a cross border marketing plan.</li> </ul>	<p>Councils</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p><b>Visitor Information Review and Delivery</b></p> <p>Undertake a visitor information and signage review across the two Councils, and prepare a strategy to deliver the following needs as one destination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Signage (wayfinding and tourism).</li> <li>- Gateway enhancements and interventions.</li> <li>- Visitor information touchpoints throughout the visitor journey.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertake a visitor information services review.</li> </ul>	<p>Councils</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<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.</p> <p>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>- Regional PR program to promote the value of tourism to the local economy and community.</li> <li>- MRT branded business swapcard 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 to develop and deliver plan.</li> <li>- Councils to deliver actions at local level.</li> </ul>	<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
<p><b>Temporary Workforce Accommodation</b> Temporary workforce accommodation hub to absorb worker housing which is impacting on visitor accommodation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gannawarra Shire to investigate delivery of temporary workforce accommodation in Kerang, in line with the findings of the Urban Growth Plan.</li> </ul>	Gannawarra SC	Short term
<p><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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 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.</li> <li>- Development of pathways program to attract and retain staff, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Attraction of secondary students.</li> <li>o Communication of clear progression pathways within and between business.</li> <li>o Encouraging use of staff sharing platform to provide consistency of work.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MRT to develop a regional workforce skills gap analysis and campaigns.</li> <li>- MRT to work with local Councils and other stakeholders (jobs boards, LLENs etc) to promote opportunities.</li> </ul>	<p>MRT DRM Councils Secondary schools Higher education Employment networks</p>	Short term and Ongoing
<p><b>Skills Development Plan</b> Using the outcomes of the regional workforce gap analysis and feedback from industry, as well as previous work undertaken with Swan Hill and Mildura Councils, collaborate with TAFE's, higher education providers and employment networks to deliver tailored and location-based industry training solutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertake workshop with industry to identify specific skill and training needs.</li> <li>- Work with higher education providers to develop courses and course material.</li> </ul>	<p>Councils Industry MRT DRM Higher education TAFEs</p>	Short term and Ongoing
<p><b>Digital Literacy for Operators</b> There is a need to improve digital literacy of operators in the region. This includes online booking, use of social media and motivational websites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deliver a digital literacy program for industry in Gannawarra and Murray River Councils.</li> </ul>	<p>MRT DRM Councils</p>	Ongoing

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p><b>Weekend Trading</b></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 extending businesses hours when major events are occurring in the region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with retail and hospitality businesses to encourage longer weekend trading hours during events, as a first step in extending trading hours.</li> </ul>	<p>Councils</p> <p>Industry</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Capacity Building and Networking</b></p> <p>Ensure the tourism industry is well-connected and supported through the development of networking opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Host an annual round table for tourism and hospitality businesses.</li> </ul>	<p>Councils</p> <p>Industry</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

# 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

### Gannawarra Shire Council

- Creative Gannawarra Strategy 2021-2025
- Gannawarra 2025
- Economic Development Strategy 2019-2024
- Gannawarra Waterfront Masterplans 2019
- Strategic Tourism Plan 2015-2020
- Sport and Recreation Strategy 2019-2029

### Murray River Council

- Murray River Council Waterfront Strategy Request for Quotation 2021
- Murray River Council Priority Projects 2021

