



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday 17 August 2018

MURRAY REGIONAL TOURISM FORUMS AND MASTERCLASSES TO DRIVE LOCAL FOOD MOVEMENT

Murray Regional Tourism has released the latest round of its Farm To Plate Forums and Masterclasses to continue the development of the Murray as an agri and culinary tourism destination, stimulate the region's food culture, and create commercial demand for regional produce.

CEO of Murray Regional Tourism, Mark Francis, said he was excited about these upcoming Forums and Masterclasses and the opportunities this will bring for industry.

"These workshops are an important stage of year one of the Murray Farm to Plate Program and are aimed at addressing specific challenges and opportunities relating to the development of a sustainable regional food system in the Murray region.

Much of the work to date has centred on the development of the overall strategy and working with primary producers to innovate their business beyond the farm gate and tap into tourism demand for local produce and agritourism experiences - essentially working on the supply side of the farm to plate value chain.

These upcoming workshops focus on building commercial demand for regional produce through two streams, the first working through the Food Experience Masterclass with our region's chefs and hospitality industry and secondly in partnership with businesses involved in wholesaling, transport and distribution via the Regional Distribution Pilot forums.

Food Experience Masterclasses:

To commence this process the first two masterclasses will be hosted at The River Deck in Albury and the other at The Naked Tree in Yarrawonga - for those involved in the food service sector such as restaurateurs, café owners, chefs, cooks and hospitality business owners.

Masterclass participants will be engaged in an innovative program which focuses on building relationships between the industry, and making it easier for businesses to source Murray regional produce consistently, cost effectively and efficiently.

"Ensuring restaurants and food service businesses not only source and use regional produce, but also that they are able to tell the story of provenance to the customer is critical for food tourism," Mark said.

Alex Smit, owner of The River Deck, said "The River Deck is committed to using regional food and beverages on our menu, and we partner with as many local and regional suppliers as possible. We are very lucky to have so many fantastic producers on our doorstep. I look forward to hosting my food industry colleagues for this innovative masterclass to support the development of a thriving local food industry."

The Masterclasses will provide a combination of practical knowledge on seasonal sourcing, menu planning, marketing and communication of the regional food story. Participants will also have the opportunity to participate in on-farm experiences to meet local producers and learn about production during a series of chef's tours scheduled for later in the year.

Media enquiries:

Chatterbox Marketing - 0419 101 579 - media@chatterboxmarketing.com.au

**Event Dates:**Food Experience Masterclasses:

Session 1: Monday 27 August 2018

Time: 3.30pm - 5.30pm

Location: The River Deck, 48 Noreuil Parade, Albury

Session 2: Tuesday 28 August 2018

Time: 9.00am - 11.00am

Location: The Naked Tree, 40 Belmore Street, Yarrawonga

Regional Distribution Pilot Forums:

The second area of focus is on enabling the supply chain with the first two forums being held in Cobram and Wodonga. These will draw together those involved in the distribution of food and drink throughout the region. Businesses involved in transport, logistics, cold chain, distribution and food businesses that wholesale or transport food in and out of the region; along with local retail and food service companies, are encouraged to attend.

Forum discussions will focus on business opportunities to promote regional trade of our local produce, in order to connect the region's food producers and value adders with consumer-facing businesses.

Event Dates:Regional Distribution Pilot Forums:

Session 1: Tuesday 28 August 2018

Time: 1.30pm - 3.00pm

Location: Cobram Hotel, Harvest Room, Cnr Station & Main Streets, Cobram

Session 2: Thursday 30 August 2018

Time: 1.30pm - 3.00pm

Location: Wodonga Council, Council Chambers, 104 Hovell St, Wodonga

For more information or to register for any event, please visit:

<http://www.murrayregionaltourism.com.au/industry-development/product-development/murray-farm-to-plate-program/>

The Murray Farm to Plate Program is a regional cross-border initiative and has been proudly funded by the NSW Government in association with the Victorian Government, Local Government partners, and Murray Regional Tourism.

Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) works in partnership with Visit Victoria, Destination New South Wales, Destination Riverina Murray, 13 Local Government areas and Regional Tourism to grow the visitor economy across the Murray region.

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