



## **NEW ROAD MAP FOR MURRAY TOURISM AND AGRIBUSINESS INDUSTRIES**

**The creation of a new Murray Regional Food Council, a food provenance accreditation system, regional food brand and a 'farm to plate' business innovation incubator are just four new initiatives proposed in a new 'Murray Farm to Plate' Consultant Report delivered to Murray Regional Tourism today.**

From mining to dining boom: tourism and agribusiness are set to be among Australia's fastest growing industries of the coming decade. This is a trend Murray Regional Tourism is determined to capitalise on.

The proposed Murray Regional Food Council would provide a platform for collaboration across all sectors and the government and to oversee the delivery of these new initiatives. If created, a new regional food brand would be backed by a new food provenance accreditation system. The brand would celebrate and leverage every local products' origins and food journey in a similar way to how the wine industry differentiates by growing region.

Chair of Murray Regional Tourism, Wendy Greiner, said the completion of the Murray Farm to Plate Report is an important milestone and is critical for the future growth of both the tourism and agriculture industries in the region.

"We now have a sound understanding of both the challenges and opportunities we are facing. However, importantly, we also have a clear direction to finalise the road map to improve the quality, authenticity and availability of locally produced food and beverage experiences for visitors and locals in the Murray region," Wendy said.

"Across six months and 10 workshops, we engaged with over 230 people from across the entire supply chain, including producers, transport operators, wholesalers and distributors who connect with the food service and independent retail businesses."

"I would like to thank each and every one of those people who volunteered their time and contributed their ideas. I also wish to recognise and acknowledge the work of our team at Murray Regional Tourism for overseeing the whole process." she said.

A final round of industry consultation will now be undertaken to finalise the Murray Farm to Plate Strategy and five sub-regional Farm to Plate cluster action plans.

The opportunities and potential benefits of this work to both the food and visitor economies in the region are significant. The industry isn't coming from a standing start, either: residents and visitors spend a combined \$2.2 billion in the Murray region on food and drink each year.

From a tourism perspective the benefit is the delivery of high quality and authentic food and agritourism products and experiences for visitors. From an agri-food perspective, the benefit is the ability to tap into and connect with high yield markets and develop direct relationships with consumers and buyers.

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### **Media enquiries:**

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**Other initiatives included in the Report include:**

- The establishment of five sub regional Farm to Plate clusters, to facilitate collaboration and trade at a local level;
- Establish an accredited provenance framework across the Farm To Plate value chain, which provide the foundations for a new Murray regional food brand;
- Establishment of a regional food/drink incubator accelerator program to facilitate business innovation, product and business development;
- Development of a local consumer engagement model to promote local food culture and word of mouth marketing.

**Quote attributable to Victorian Member for Northern Victoria Mark Gepp:**

"The Victorian Government is committed to supporting our food industries by encouraging innovation and diversity and helping producers to access local and international markets."

**About 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.

**About the 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.

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