

THE MIGHTY MURRAY TOURISM BOOM! RECORD BREAKING VISITOR NUMBERS

Record tourism figures continue to rise to exponential heights in the Murray region with the latest official data indicating travel to the area is up 6.4% with 6.1 million visitors to the region in the year ending December 2018, trumping regional Victoria and NSW and Australia's national growth rates!

The data also revealed that in the year ending December 2018 visitors spent \$1.8 billion in the region (+ 16.7 per cent) and enjoyed a record 10 million nights (+12.2%).

Murray Regional Tourism Board Chair Wendy Greiner hailed the results, attributing the outcome to ongoing hard work and cross border collaboration between local governments, our two state tourism agencies, regional tourism organisations, industry and Murray Regional Tourism (MRT). This effective partnership has led to consistent and continual year on year growth in visitor numbers, expenditure and nights spent in the Murray region.

"It's also marvellous to see that the expertise we are bringing to the table in improving the wider tourism offerings throughout the Murray region is having such a positive flow-on effect," Ms Greiner said.

"The Murray region boasts some of the finest scenery, adventure, gourmet food and nature-based experiences that Australia has to offer and with such a diverse array of quality and unique offerings it is fantastic to see that visitors are fast realising this is the place to be!" said Ms Greiner.

"We have worked incredibly hard over the last two years to further enhance the region's food and wine experiences with the introduction of the Murray Farm to Plate strategy. These results reveal that the number one activity people are enjoying is eating out, dining at restaurants or cafés and exploring the plethora of fresh local produce available."

These results not only demonstrate the significant contribution the Murray region makes to growing the Victorian and New South Wales visitor economies, but also the key role tourism plays in creating jobs and stimulating investment in the region's communities. Tourism is the second largest employer along the Murray, providing 20 per cent of the region's jobs.

Each quarter, Tourism Research Australia releases information relating to the number of visitors to each of the tourism regions across Australia, looking at both international (IVS) and national (NVS) visitation and spending.

The Murray region spans 1700km of the river from Albury-Wodonga to Mildura-Wentworth, encompassing 13 local government areas.

“Our role is to work with stakeholders from far and wide to not only attract visitors but to create an atmosphere that encourages people to stay longer, spend more and return year after year because they have had such a wonderful time in our very special part of the world,” Ms Greiner says.

“The Murray region again achieved its highest results on record with our cross border partnership so successful, receiving 6.1 million visitors (+6.4 per cent) who stayed 10.0 million nights (+ 12.2 per cent) and spent \$1.8 billion (up 16.7 per cent).”

Key Murray Region tourism results for the year ending December 2018 are:

- 6.1 million visitors, up 6.4% on year ending 2017
- 10.0 million nights, up 12.2% on year ending 2017
- \$1.8 billion spent by visitors to the region, up 16.7% on year ending 2017

The Murray region has grown at a higher rate than the rest of regional Victoria, regional NSW and the Australian average in the following key areas:

- The number of nights spent in the Murray region by Domestic Overnight Travellers grew by +8.8%. Compared to Regional Victoria +2.3% and Regional NSW (+6.1%) and all of Australia (7.2%)
- The number of nights spent in the Murray region by International Overnight Travellers grew by +34.5%. Compared to Regional Victoria (+2.1%) and Regional NSW (+1.4%) and all of Australia (3.8%)
- The number of Domestic Daytrips taken to the Murray region grew by +9.1%. Compared to Regional Victoria (+6.0%) and Regional NSW (+4.5%) and all of Australia (7.4%)

Highlights across the sub-regions of the Murray include:

Albury Wodonga:

- Albury Wodonga’s domestic daytrip visitors leapt by 20.5% on YE Dec 17 to 1.2 million.
- Albury Wodonga welcomed 23,900 international overnight visitors (up 13.3% on YE Dec 17).

Sun Country:

- The Sun Country sub-region had a booming number of international overnight visitors, climbing 68% on YE Dec 17 or 8,500 international overnight visitors.
- Importantly for maximising financial benefits to the region, those international visitors were spending several nights in the Sun Country region, too with 255,900 international visitor nights recorded.

Echuca Moama

- Domestic overnight visitors to Echuca Moama grew by 4% on YE Dec 17 to 756,000.
- 2 million domestic visitor nights were recorded in Echuca-Moama, an increase of 5.7% on YE Dec 17.

Swan Hill:

- A standout result was an 18.7% increase in domestic visitor nights to 1.1 million in the Swan Hill region when compared to YE Dec 17.
- Domestic daytrip visitors to Swan Hill increased to 290,000 (up 2.5% on YE Dec 17).

Mildura Wentworth:

- The Mildura – Wentworth sub-region enjoyed a 30.6% increase in Domestic Daytrip Visitor on YE Dec 17 to 293,000.
- Mildura – Wentworth also received a 65% boost to international visitor night stays when compared to YE Dec 17 with 759,700 nights recorded.

About Murray Regional Tourism (MRT)

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

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