

Mar 26, 2025

MRT Quarterly Meeting | ONLINE

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Attachments  MRT Quarterly Meeting | ONLINE

Meeting records  Transcript  Recording

Summary

This meeting, attended by Kaylee Whitfield , Cameron Sutton), Georgia Homer-Osborne , Pamela Canavan , Shari Butcher , Yvette Myhill (DRM), various LGA representatives, and Tony Tranter, covered MRT updates, new tourism initiatives, including the "Mates of the Murray" campaign and DRM projects, LGA progress reports, and upcoming events. Next steps include finalizing the Murray River Adventure Trail design by March 28th, launching the Mates of the Murray campaign on April 4th, and continued collaboration on various projects and events across the region.

Details

- **Introductions and Welcome:** Participants introduced themselves, including Kaylee Whitfield, the new Industry and Government Lead at Murray Regional

Tourism. They noted the challenges of a virtual meeting and some participants joining late ([00:02:07](#)) ([00:05:13](#)).

- **Acknowledgement of Country:** Kaylee Whitfield began the meeting with an acknowledgement of country, paying respects to elders past and present ([00:05:13](#)).
- **MRT Update (Cameron Sutton):** Cameron Sutton provided an update on MRT activities. Visitation to the Murray region was slightly up compared to the rest of Victoria. Significant investments in holiday parks and continued successful events were contributing factors ([00:06:16](#)). They also discussed upcoming TRA data, expected by Friday, and its integration with border bubble data ([00:07:34](#)).
- **Data Access and Lalis Platform:** Sutton discussed the Localis Platform, access for councils, and the upcoming inclusion of visitor data at no extra cost ([00:08:43](#)). They noted ongoing improvements to the platform and the collaborative approach to data reporting ([00:09:57](#)).
- **Future of TRA Data and Mobility Data:** Sutton highlighted uncertainties regarding the future of TRA data collection and the introduction of mobility data by PT. They mentioned the availability of geo-fencing options within Lalis for more precise local data ([00:11:14](#)).
- **ATDW Product Guide:** MRT was returning to the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) platform to create a new product guide. They emphasized increased visibility of golf and First Nations cultural tourism, based on buyer feedback ([00:12:33](#)). Some operators from the previous year's guide were not included this year ([00:13:38](#)).
- **Murray River Adventure Trail:** The Murray River Adventure Trail stages two and three were on track and budget for delivery by March 28th. They anticipated sharing the final design with relevant parties by March 28th or early the following week ([00:14:58](#)).
- **Website and Marketing Update (Georgia Homer-Osborne and Pamela Canavan):** Georgia Homer-Osborne and Pamela Canavan presented updates on the new website, noting ongoing adjustments ([00:17:41](#)). They highlighted the Visit Victoria co-op focusing on specific councils and upcoming social media campaigns. They also discussed Georgia's upcoming maternity leave ([00:19:56](#)).
- **Blog Updates and Conference Highlights:** Pamela Canavan discussed recent blogs, including one on waterfront holiday parks ([00:21:10](#)), and their attendance at the Destination Australia and RTO forums ([00:22:51](#)). They

mentioned valuable insights gained from discussions on social impact of tourism, AI applications, and collaboration with local government ([00:23:46](#)).

- **Social Media Performance:** Pamela Canavan shared data on top performing organic social media posts, highlighting successful collaborations with operators and influencers. They emphasized the effectiveness of using operator-provided content ([00:33:16](#)).
- **Social Media Strategy:** They discussed incorporating more itinerary-based content and highlighting smaller towns on social media ([00:36:40](#)). They noted the need for a more balanced approach on LinkedIn, incorporating both informational and engaging content ([00:37:48](#)).
- **Mates of the Murray Update:** Georgia Homer-Osborne provided an update on the "Mates of the Murray" campaign, focusing on featuring operators, highlighting community connection, and promoting sustainability ([00:42:33](#)). The campaign launch date was set for Sunday, April 4th ([00:46:01](#)). They also highlighted the diverse range of locations and operators featured ([00:53:52](#)).
- **LinkedIn Campaign Discussion:** A discussion ensued regarding the use of paid LinkedIn campaigns, with varied opinions on their value and return on investment ([00:56:12](#)). Kaylee Whitfield offered to share their experience with LinkedIn campaigns ([00:57:59](#)).
- **Meeting Conclusion:** The meeting concluded with expressions of gratitude for the participation and an offer to address any further questions individually ([00:57:59](#)). They also noted the limited budget for the Mates of the Murray campaign ([00:58:54](#)).
- **Marketing Campaign Updates:** Georgia Homer-Osborne described their marketing campaign, which includes blogs and videos for various tourism operators. They noted challenges in collaboration due to varying social media presence among operators ([00:59:52](#)).
- **DRM Project Presentations:** Kaylee Whitfield introduced Shari Butcher and Yvette Myhill from DRM, who presented two projects: a First Nations content creation project and a PR accelerator program for tourism operators ([01:00:44](#)) ([01:03:14](#)).
- **Murray Tourism PR Accelerator Course:** Shari Butcher detailed the PR accelerator course, including its objectives ([01:04:16](#)), target audience ([01:05:29](#)), training content, and facilitators, Georgie Robertson and Liz Nabel ([01:04:16](#)) ([01:06:46](#)). They mentioned the course will include one-on-one mentoring ([01:10:15](#)).

- **First Nations Content Creation Project:** Shari Butcher explained the project's aim to enhance promotion of First Nations tourism experiences ([01:12:16](#)), their collaboration with Gigi Media, and deliverables ([01:13:37](#)). Yvette Myhill added that the focus will be on showcasing the visitor experience ([01:16:57](#)).
- **LGA Updates:** Kaylee Whitfield facilitated updates from various Local Government Areas (LGAs). Kat Polan from Aubry LGA reported on website progress, staffing, and an upcoming marketing campaign ([01:34:16](#)). Chloe from Visit Deni shared updates on their website, a recent film shoot, and their plans for an event guide ([01:36:15](#)). They also discussed plans for the Town Hall ([01:40:53](#)). Scott Wishart and Cass from Gateway to Gannawarra reported on their new website, a TV campaign, and visitor guide updates ([01:43:39](#)).
- **Website Launches and Content Creation:** Several LGAs reported on the launch or progress of their websites, including Visit Deni ([01:36:15](#)), Gateway to Gannawarra ([01:43:39](#)), and Murray River Council ([01:56:50](#)). Many also highlighted current or upcoming content creation projects ([01:36:15](#)) ([01:46:38](#)).
- **Upcoming Workshops and Events:** Kaylee Whitfield announced upcoming workshops on AI and accommodation/revenue management ([01:32:55](#)), and mentioned various events such as the Trail of Lights in Mildura ([01:50:11](#)), the World Bowls in September ([01:58:25](#)), and Easter events ([01:37:23](#)) ([01:44:45](#)).
- **Tourism Operator Nights:** Georgia Homer-Osborne shared their experience attending a tourism operator night hosted by Greater Hume, highlighting the value of such events for networking and collaboration among smaller operators ([01:49:09](#)).
- **Moirra LGA Updates:** Visit Sun Country shared Moirra LGA updates, including the finalization of an economic development strategy, the development of a destination management plan, and work on an events policy ([01:51:18](#)). They also mentioned a new marketing campaign in collaboration with Federation Council, and Leah McGrath provided visitor services updates, including retail space refresh, team growth, and improvements to their "What's On" document ([01:52:43](#)).
- **Murray River Council Updates:** Kristy Hayes presented Murray River Council's updates, focusing on their autumn/winter campaign, website launch, River Country Art Trail progress, and preparations for the World Bowls event ([01:55:54](#)).

- **Mullamine Events and Summer Activation:** Kristy Hayes discussed upcoming events in Mullamine, including yabby races and potential music events over the summer months. They are working on securing capacity in the capacity port enterprise and attracting music events. Cheryl also contributed to discussions regarding chukama activations ([01:59:14](#)).
- **Red Hot Summer Music Festival:** Kristy Hayes reported on efforts to secure the Red Hot Summer Music Festival. Challenges last year included finding a headliner and scheduling conflicts with other destinations. They are hopeful for success this year. They also mentioned other smaller music events, including Parracuda Blues at Parracuda Station ([02:00:08](#)).
- **Tasma Parks Event:** Kristy Hayes highlighted a potential new event at one of the Tasma parks, which has space for approximately 250 people ([02:00:08](#)). They are exploring opportunities to fill gaps in the event calendar, particularly in early December and March ([02:01:03](#)).
- **River Days and Winter Blues:** Kristy Hayes discussed the success of River Days in Barram, noting its sell-out status and plans to expand next year ([02:02:37](#)). They also emphasized the popularity of their Winter Blues event, which has now become their largest annual event. They aim to secure more events to boost tourism, particularly during the off-season ([02:01:03](#)).
- **River Boat Tours:** Georgia Homer-Osborne inquired about the success of river boat tours. Kristy Hayes described them as a successful and established event, attracting a different market than larger music festivals like Red Hot Summer. They plan to partner, not compete, with other events ([02:01:52](#)).
- **Visit Echuca Moama Marketing:** Julia Druitt shared that they are working with Destination Store on visitor chukama initiatives. They are exploring the possibility of engaging Destination Store to develop and implement a marketing plan for Visit Echuca Moama ([02:03:17](#)).
- **Art Silo Paintings Project:** Visit Deni inquired about the art silo paintings project. Kristy Hayes clarified that it was grant-funded, involving four water towers and one sculpture, with Julia Druitt providing further details on funding sources. The funding came from the New South Wales government's regional tourism activation fund, totaling \$1.2 million for five locations ([02:04:16](#)). Challenges were encountered with Grand Corp regarding the use of silos ([02:05:06](#)).
- **Swan Hill CBD Master Plan and Tourism Hub:** Marcia Pollington gave an update on Swan Hill initiatives, including a CBD master plan, a new pedestrian bridge, and a new tourism hub expected to be completed in mid-November.

The new tourism hub will house a relocated information center and a cultural hub. The art gallery redevelopment is also underway, expected to finish in mid-to-late October ([02:06:31](#)).

- **Swan Hill Events and Marketing Campaigns:** Swan Hill Incorporated detailed several upcoming events, including an Easter family fun day, a shop local promotion, and a members' night. They also discussed their "No Matter the Season" campaign, website phase 2, and several marketing campaigns for the Pub Grub Trail and a local gift card ([02:08:38](#)) ([02:10:38](#)).
- **Swan Hill Food and Wine Festival:** Swan Hill Incorporated reported that their Food and Wine Festival was their biggest ever, exceeding 2200 attendees. They also highlighted the success of Speedway, Rev Down Splash Up, and Dine and Find events held over the same long weekend ([02:12:44](#)).
- **Wonga/Brewonga Council Signage Project:** Kaylee Whitfield checked in with Kat Polan from Wonga/Brewonga Council. Georgia Homer-Osborne asked about a signage project, and Kat Polan indicated it was a large project that would take time to implement ([02:15:19](#)).
- **Wentworth Visitor Center and Event Funding Policy:** Lexi Stockman reported on the overwhelming success of Wentworth's new visitor center, with high souvenir sales and increased tourism ([02:16:22](#)). They are also implementing an event funding policy allowing organizations and individuals to apply for up to \$30,000 in funding ([02:18:13](#)). The policy aims to provide a structured application process for event funding, requiring data on event impact and local supplier utilization ([02:25:53](#)). The policy also includes a planning guide and collateral to assist event organizers ([02:26:47](#)).
- **Wentworth Accommodation and Trenton Waters Resort:** Lexi Stockman discussed initiatives to improve accommodation offerings in Wentworth, including business readiness courses for local businesses ([02:20:59](#)). They also mentioned the upcoming opening of Trenton Waters Resort, a large-scale resort with various amenities ([02:21:55](#)).
- **Bullanginya Dreaming Light and Sound Show:** Kaylee Whitfield introduced Tony Tranter, who discussed the Bullanginya Dreaming project in Barooga. The project involved a collaboration with the Bangerang community, resulting in a nighttime walking experience showcasing indigenous stories and cultural heritage. The project incorporated artwork, voiceovers from indigenous elders, and a focus on preserving and sharing cultural significance. The team faced challenges in working with diverse timelines and values, learning to prioritize genuine collaboration and respect for cultural practices ([02:48:01](#)) ([02:53:16](#)).

- Bullanginya Light and Sound Show Success and Collaboration:** Tony described the Bullanginya light and sound show, highlighting its success, positive feedback, and accessibility features ([02:58:47](#)). They emphasized the strong partnership with Aboriginal artists, particularly Rebecca Atkinson, with a percentage of merchandise sales benefiting her ([02:59:41](#)). The show includes collaborations with ACE tour guides and incorporates Aboriginal cultural elements, like performances by the Bangerang dancers ([02:58:47](#)). Challenges included floods and managing diverse timelines and cultures, but they expressed commitment to the project. The project's long-term benefits are expected to become more evident in a year or two ([03:00:40](#)).
- Positive Feedback and Comparisons to Other Shows:** Georgia Homer-Osborne praised the show's quality, collaboration, and unique, unrepeatable product ([03:01:43](#)), suggesting its value extends to the broader Murray region. Kat Polan noted similarities and differences between Bullinga and the Aurora light show in Albury, specifically mentioning the scale differences and the use of space ([03:02:47](#)). Tony explained that Bullinga's show was initially 5km long but reduced to 1.8 km, and they drew inspiration from other similar shows, notably Balorat's use of fire ([03:03:40](#)). The addition of a fire at the end proved very popular with attendees. Louise Clint highlighted the fire's role in visitor engagement and reflection ([03:04:33](#)).