

NEW VISITOR DATA SHOWS TOURISM CRITICAL TO MURRAY ECONOMY

The Murray region achieved record visitor numbers, nights and spending in the year ended 30 September 2019, according to the latest results from Tourism Research Australia.

The region's strong growth reflects how critically important the tourism industry is to the local, regional, state and national economies and highlights the need for the industry to unite in its marketing efforts to minimise the impact of the devastating bushfires.

For the first time ever, visitor expenditure in the Murray exceeded \$2 billion, an increase of 11.5 per cent over the past year and a major milestone for the region.

A record 6.5 million people visited the region and stayed an unprecedented 11 million nights - growth of 3.3 per cent and 8.4 per cent respectively.

This record-breaking achievement was driven by substantial increases in domestic overnight travellers (up 6.8 per cent to 3.1 million visitors), international overnight stays (up 23.4 per cent to 1.8 million nights), domestic overnight stays (up 5.9 per cent to 9.1 million nights), expenditure by international visitors (up 34.9 per cent to \$93 million) and domestic daytrip spending (up 17.8 per cent to \$522 million).

The Murray region's results for international visitor nights and expenditure by international overnight and domestic day trip visitors again exceeded national, New South Wales and Victorian growth rates over the past twelve months.

Quotes attributable to Murray Regional Tourism Board Chair, Wendy Greiner

"The latest visitor statistics again demonstrate the significant contribution of the Murray region to the growth of the Victorian, New South Wales and national visitor economies, as well as the key role tourism plays in creating jobs and stimulating investment in the region's communities."

"These results are outstanding for the region and reflect the high quality of our experiences, product offerings and events across the region; however, we expect future results to reflect the impact of the bushfires and are working proactively with our local and state government partners to implement marketing strategies that will support the tourism industry over the short, medium and long term."

"The Murray offers an amazing array of experiences including culinary, nature, arts, culture and events, and we encourage people to get out and experience the diversity of the region."

"The Murray provides the perfect setting for a short break over the Australia Day and Labour Day long weekends as well as Easter, or for any short break period."

The Murray region spans 1,700 kilometres of the Murray River from Albury Wodonga to Mildura Wentworth.

Murray Regional Tourism 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.

Highlights across the Murray sub-regions for the year ended 30 September 2019 include:

Albury Wodonga:

- Visitors stayed a total of 2.2 million nights representing an additional 288,000 nights or 14.9 per cent increase.
- Expenditure by domestic overnight visitors grew by a significant \$122 million to \$385 million.

Sun Country:

- International overnight visitors increased by 12.3 per cent to a sizeable 8,500 visitors.
- Visitors from New South Wales continue to rise, now making up 19.5 per cent of all domestic overnight visitors.

Echuca Moama:

- The domestic visiting friends and relatives (VFR) market grew, with 3.9 per cent more visitors and a 7.3 per cent increase in nights.
- Domestic overnight visitors spent \$318 million, representing an additional \$21 million or 7 per cent boost.

Swan Hill:

- Swan Hill welcomed 407,000 domestic daytrip visitors, an increase of 23.3 per cent.
- Of the more than one million domestic visitor nights, business was the main purpose of stay, growing by 22 per cent to 36.5 per cent of domestic visitor nights and surpassing the visiting friends and relatives (VFR) and holiday markets.

Mildura Wentworth:

- Domestic daytrip visitors were up a substantial 44.2 per cent to 361,000 visitors.
- Domestic overnight visitors contributed an incredible \$300 million to the local economy, an increase of \$78 million or 35 per cent.

For the full Murray Region Snapshot Year Ended September 2019 visit:

<https://www.murrayregionaltourism.com.au/research-resources/murray-research/>

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