

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Strong growth in visitor expenditure across the Murray region

Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) is pleased to announce visitation to the Murray region is continuing to grow based on the recent release of year ending December 2017 quarterly visitation statistics by Tourism Research Australia.

The Murray region received 5.8 million visitors, up by 8.5% on the year ending (YE) December 2016 figures. This resulted in growth in total visitor expenditure of 11.1% to \$1.6 billion in the Murray region.

In terms of domestic overnight travel, the region received 2.8 million visitors, up by 6.6% on YE December 2016.

Wendy Greiner, Chair of Murray Regional Tourism, said "The 2017 visitation results highlight how important the visitor economy is to regional jobs and economic prosperity and we are delighted the high quality visitor experiences on offer to visitors has injected \$1.6 billion into the local economy.

"Our highly successful and unique cross border collaborative approach to marketing the region has seen a strong increase in visitor numbers with gains achieved domestically with over 7.7 million nights spent in the region, an increase of 4.9% on the previous year with visitors staying on average 2.8 nights."

'Holiday' (41.1%) was the main purpose of visitors to the region, followed by 'visiting friends and relatives' at 35.8%.

The most popular activities for visitors to the region were 'eating out, dine at a restaurant or cafe' (58.8%), 'visiting friends and relatives' (41.0%), going to 'pubs, clubs and discos' (28.5%) and 'sightseeing or looking around' (23.6%). 'Going shopping for pleasure' was also a popular activity (18.0%).

Albury Wodonga received 730,000 domestic overnight visitors (up 7.5% on YE December 2016), who spent an estimated \$239 million dollars in the region and stayed over 1.7 million nights with most travelling from Victoria at 47.6%.

The most popular activities for domestic overnight visitors to Albury Wodonga were 'eating out, dine at a restaurant or café' (61.3%) and 'visiting friends and relatives' (41.5%).

Sun Country received 570,000 visitors (up by 12.0% on YE December 2016) with these visitors spending nearly 1.8 million nights in the area.

'Holiday' was the main purpose of visitors to the region (48.6%) and domestic overnight visitors spent \$232 million in the region during this time.

Visitation to Echuca Moama grew 3.6% in the year ending December 2017, resulting in 727,000 domestic overnight visitors. Visitors spent \$250 million in the region during the year ending

December 2017, and the most popular activities included 'eating out' (59.2 %) and visiting friends and relatives (41.8%).

Domestic overnight visitors preferred to stay with 'friends and relatives' in Echuca Moama (29.9%) followed by 'caravan park or commercial camping ground' (25.3%).

403,000 domestic overnight visitors travelled to the Swan Hill region, up by 22.4% on the previous year's results. Visitors spent an average of \$171 per night, with total domestic expenditure in the Swan Hill region totalling \$165 million for the year.

'Holiday or leisure' was the largest purpose for visits to the region (35.8%), followed closely by 'visiting friends and relatives' (34.1%) and 'business' (17.2%).

Mildura Wentworth received 543,000 domestic overnight visitors (up 8.9% on YE December 2016), and visitors spent nearly 1.4 million nights (up 7.2% on the previous year).

Domestic overnight visitor spend was \$236 million, with 48.6% of visitors and 48.6% of nights coming from Victoria, 20.3% of visitors and 18.5% of nights from NSW and 26.4% of visitors and 28.2% of nights from SA. Visitor numbers from South Australia have increased by 34.0% compared to the previous year.

MRT works in partnership with Visit Victoria, Destination New South Wales and 13 local government areas and regional tourism associations to drive the development of the tourism industry within the Murray region.

For further information visit www.murrayregionaltourism.com.au

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