



MEDIA RELEASE

For release Wednesday 21 March 2018

**Future-proofing our region:
Destination Management Plan launched for Mid-Western Murray Region**

By the year 2031 the Murray region aims to increase tourism by 44.4 per cent – by 2.4 million overnight and day trip visitors to a total of 7.8 million visitors – and the new Destination Management Plan for Murray Regional Tourism provides the blueprint to secure this growth and economic vibrancy for the Mid-Western Murray region.

Taking in the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Swan Hill, Gannawarra and Murray River (western half), the Mid-Western Murray region offers visitors rich experiences across river-based, food, wine and produce, fishing, festivals and events, history and heritage, nature-based and business events.

MRT is the only Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) in Australia that includes areas within two states, Victoria and New South Wales, and is responsible for providing overarching tourism strategy for the Murray Region.

Wendy Greiner, Chair of Murray Regional Tourism, said that tourism to the Murray region in 2017 accounted for 19.9 per cent of total employment, attracting 5.4 million visitors (day trip and overnight) and \$2.9 billion in visitor expenditure (direct and indirect).

“Our region and our partners have been successful in growing tourism over the past six years by 623,000 visitors and \$339 million in visitor expenditure, with an additional \$372 million in tourism-related projects and over 4,500 direct and indirect jobs,” she said.

“Today, with the launch of our 2018 Destination Management Plan, we embark on the next phase in the Murray region’s tourism growth. The Plan sets a series of infrastructure, product and experience priorities to ensure that we continue to thrive and grow, and I look forward to working with the State Governments of Victoria and NSW, with Destination Riverina Murray, the 13 local government authorities, and with the tourism sector and communities that are united by the Murray, to deliver on the potential identified in the Plan,” Ms Greiner added.

The Victorian Minister for Tourism and Major Events, John Eren said, “The Murray River’s popularity as a holiday destination has grown enormously in recent years, a result of the region’s diverse strengths as well as the continued focus and consultative, cross-border approach of Murray Regional Tourism.”

“I look forward to seeing the region continue to develop under this new Destination Management Plan, and I am confident that the clear and strategic vision outlined, along with the strong leadership of Murray Regional Tourism, will deliver even more success for the Murray region and the communities it supports,” he said.

The NSW Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Adam Marshall said, "Tourism is vital to the people of the Murray River. It injects billions of dollars into local economies, and provides nearly 20 per cent of local jobs.

"The NSW Government recognises the significant tourism gains made in recent years and central to this success has been the unique cross-border collaboration between the Murray River communities. I am excited about the delivery of the Murray Region Destination Management Plan and the even brighter future it heralds for tourism along the Murray," he said.

Priority projects for the Mid-Western Murray region targeted under the Destination Management Plan include:

- Koondrook Butter Factory Arts Precinct and Murray River Brewery and Distillery: creating a new food and beverage destination in the region by rejuvenating a heritage site and developing a new brewery and distillery with a co-located arts and business precinct to offer brewing, coffee roasting, chocolate, food and wine, artist and artisan studios;
- Kerang Lakes, Koondrook and Cohuna Waterfront Masterplans: development of a masterplan, co-funded by Gannawarra Shire and State Government, identifying key areas for improvement in tourism assets and focussed on improved infrastructure, food and retail and nature-based experience development to transform the tourism offer in the region;
- Barham pontoons and Riverfront: developing boat mooring and associated infrastructure linking to the Barham Boardwalk and riverfront to enable activation of this precinct;
- Swan Hill Serviced Apartment Hotel: addressing a key gap in available accommodation, providing long and short stay solutions;
- Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery Expansion and Indigenous Experience: providing additional facilities and scope for this well-supported Gallery and introducing a new Indigenous Experience including corroborees, walking tracks, and canoe trees; and
- Swan Hill Riverfront Masterplan Stage 2: implementing the Masterplan, including a commercial development strategy to better link the river to the CBD, an active play space and introduction of public-related infrastructure to activate the river.

The Murray Regional Tourism Destination Management Plan can be downloaded from www.murrayregionaltourism.com.au

Murray Regional Tourism works in partnership with Visit Victoria, Destination New South Wales, Destination Riverina Murray and 13 local government areas and tourism associations to drive the development of the tourism industry within the region and acknowledges the funding support for this project from our partners.

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