

FEBRUARY 2023

MILDURA-WENTSWORTH LOCAL AREA PLAN AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS



Destination
Riverina Murray NSW



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters that surround the Murray River. We acknowledge and respect their history, culture and continuous connection to Country.

We pay our respects to elders – past, present and emerging who have cared for this Country for over 60,000 years.

This landscape, rich in story and opportunity, plays a pivotal part in our visitor economy and we thank Victoria and New South Wales' First Peoples for sharing this with us all.



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ACRONYMS

DMP	Destination Management Plan
DN	Destination Networks
DRNSW	Department of Regional NSW
DRM	Destination Riverina Murray
GMW	Goulburn Murray Water
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
LAP	Local Area Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
MDBA	Murray-Darling Basin Authority
MRD	Mildura Regional Development
MRAT	Murray River Adventure Trail
MRT	Murray Regional Tourism
NPWS	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services
NVS	National Visitor Survey
PTV	Public Transport Victoria
RDV	Regional Development Victoria
TRA	Tourism Research Australia
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Daytrip Visitor	Those who travel for a round trip distance of at least 50 kilometres, are away from home for at least 4 hours, and who do not spend a night away from home as part of their travel. Same day travel as part of overnight travel is excluded.
Overnight Visitor	People aged 15 years and over who undertake an overnight trip of one night or more and at least 40 kilometres away from home are referred to as overnight visitors. Only those trips where the respondent is away from home for less than 12 months are in scope of the NVS.
International Visitor	A person is defined as an international visitor to Australia if they are currently a resident overseas, have been in Australia less than one year and are aged 15 years or over.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

Murray Regional Tourism and Destination Riverina Murray have prepared Local Area Plans for 10 of the Murray region's prominent destinations.

The Local Area Plans are strategic documents that capture local aspirations and directions at a high-level to inform the Murray Region Destination Management Plan (2023-2027) (available [here](#)) and the NSW Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan (2023-2030). This has ensured local needs and priorities have been captured across both Destination Management Plans.

The Local Area Plans provide the framework for local stakeholders to work collaboratively and in partnership with Murray Regional Tourism and Destination Riverina Murray towards strengthening the regional visitor economy.

This Plan has been prepared for the destination of Mildura-Wentworth. This includes the destinations in proximity, as described in Section 1.

ANNUAL VISITOR ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

862K

Visitors

\$329M

Spend

UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION WITHIN THE MURRAY REGION

Food, and the unique stories of local producers, are a unique feature of Mildura Wentworth. The quality and diverse dining experiences of the region leverage from the commercial food producers. Products from Mildura are exported across Australia and globally, and strengthen the reputation of the area as a food bowl.

Mildura Wentworth is a place to experience food and drink culture whilst also enjoying the unique and wide-ranging nature-based assets the region has to offer.



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR THIS DESTINATION

A range of recommended actions have been identified through consultation with industry and local government stakeholders during the Local Area Plan workshops, assessment of existing local documents and strategies, and in response to visitor economy needs and opportunities for the destination.

These actions are a guide only. It is the role of stakeholders to further investigate the viability and opportunity of each project.

The table below provides a summary of the recommended actions.

Product, Experience and Events	Infrastructure and Planning	Branding, Marketing and Visitor Servicing	Industry Development and Workforce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cruising Experience Investment • Night-Time Economy Activation Plan • Product and Experience Packaging • 5-Star Hotel and Conference Centre • Streamlined Events Calendar • Waterfront Food, Drink and Entertainment Activation • Strategic Plan for Willandra Lakes and Mungo National Park • Arts Destination • Indigenous Experience Development • Mildura Riverfront Precinct and Cultural Centre • Motor Sports Complex and Facilities • Murray Winter Night Time Events • Nature Based Destination Development • "On Farm" Experiences • Mildura Amphitheatre Activation • Theme Park/Family Attraction • Accommodation Investment • Existing Accommodation Refurbishment • Murray River Adventure Trail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mungo National Park All Weather Road • Mooring and Wharf Infrastructure • Visitor Servicing infrastructure • Access and Transport Advocacy • Infrastructure Servicing • Advocacy to Address Housing Crisis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bookable Product and Packaging • Cross-Border Brand Strategy • Cross-Border Marketing Plan • Remarketing of the Murray Darling Wine Region • Visitor Information Review and Delivery • Murray Region Local Ambassador Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Regional Workforce Pathways and Promotion Program • Skills Development Plan

1. MILDURA-WENTWORTH LOCAL AREA PLAN

1.1. THIS PROJECT

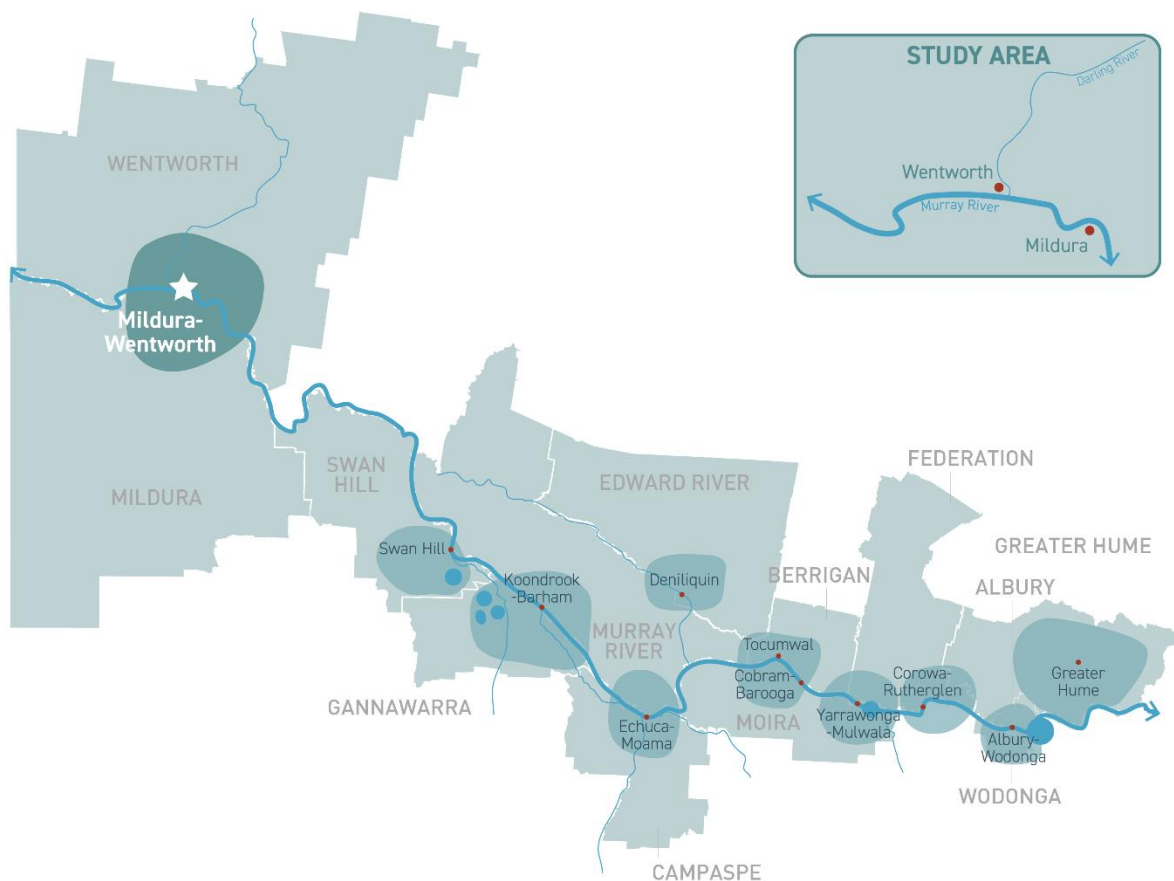
Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) and Destination Riverina Murray (DRM) have prepared Local Area Plans (Plan) for 10 of the Murray region’s prominent destinations, as shown in the map below.

These are strategic documents that capture local aspirations and directions at a high-level to inform the Murray Region Destination Management Plan (DMP) (2023-2027) and the NSW Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan (2023-2030). This has ensured local needs and priorities have been captured across both DMPs.

The Local Area Plans provide the framework for local stakeholders to work collaboratively and in partnership with MRT and DRM towards strengthening the regional visitor economy.

This Plan has been prepared for the destination of Mildura-Wentworth. This includes the destinations in proximity, as shown in the map below, and does not encompass all towns within the relevant Local Government Areas (LGAs).

F1. STUDY AREA



This project has been funded by the Murray Regional Tourism, Destination Riverina Murray, the Victorian State Government and Destination NSW.

PURPOSE AND INTENDED USE OF THE LOCAL AREA PLANS

The Local Area Plans are a partnership between MRT, DRM, Local Government, and industry stakeholders.

The purpose of these Plans is to respond to visitor economy needs and opportunities for key Murray region destinations, through a range of recommended actions and suggested next steps. It is intended that stakeholders will collaborate to further define the project specifics and drive the outcomes, in line with local priorities and resourcing.

The Plans are intended to be a reference document and a tool for local stakeholders and partners to collaborate at the destination level. The Plans do not replace local tourism plans and internal council plans.

METHOD

An overview of the project method is shown adjacent.

This Plan has been informed by engagement with local visitor economy stakeholders, review of existing local documentation, and destination research using Tourism Research Australia (TRA) and market research undertaken for the Murray region.

A full-day workshop was undertaken with key stakeholders from industry, local government and other agencies as relevant to the destination. The purpose of the workshop was to identify local issues and opportunities, identify the unique selling proposition for the destination, and develop ideas and solutions for the visitor economy.

This process has ensured the Plan is grounded in local needs and aspirations for the destination.



Context

Review of state, regional and local research, strategics and plans.
A full list of documents reviewed can be found in Appendix A.



Destination Snapshot

Review of visitation data, key products and experiences, market research and target markets.



Key Stakeholder Workshop

1 workshop with 21 operators and government stakeholders.



Project Identification and Prioritisation

Development of projects unique for this destination.

2. DESTINATION SNAPSHOT

2.1. VISITOR ECONOMY

This section provides a snapshot of the Mildura-Wentworth visitor profile, drawing on data from Tourism Research Australia (TRA), the widely accepted Australian Government data source tracking visitation across Australia.

A profile of existing domestic daytrip and overnight visitation has been provided for the 2019 calendar year¹, in order to reflect a business-as-usual scenario prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data has been provided for Mildura Rural City and Wentworth Shire Local Government Areas, due to sampling constraints that prevent further fine-grain analysis.

OVERVIEW

The Mildura-Wentworth visitor economy accounts for 19% of visitation to the Murray region, attracting 862,000 visitors and generating \$329 million in visitor expenditure.

Majority of visitors to this destination are overnight visitors (66%), generating \$288 million in expenditure. Overnight visitors to Wentworth Shire spend an average of \$321 and overnight visitors to Mildura spend an average of \$521.

The daytrip visitor market is comprised of 290,000 visitors who contribute \$42 million in expenditure. Day visitors to Mildura are high-yielding (\$166 p.p.) given the level of product offering and the diverse reasons for visiting (business, retail, medical etc), whereas daytrip visitors to Wentworth spend significantly less (\$46 p.p.).

Overall, visitors to Mildura are higher yielding across both daytrip and overnight markets in comparison to Wentworth visitors. There is opportunity for new product and experience development to drive visitor expenditure in Wentworth.

DOMESTIC VISITOR PROFILE

Visitors primarily travel to Mildura-Wentworth for holiday and leisure purposes, accounting for 57% of daytrip and 43% of overnight visitors.

Compared to the Murray region, Mildura-Wentworth has a strong business market, making up 16% of daytrip and 28% of overnight visitors. The development of accommodation with business and conferencing facilities will extract greater yield and strengthen this existing market.

Visitation to Mildura-Wentworth is primarily driven by the Victorian market. Given its location on the border of three states, Mildura-Wentworth attracts a strong proportion of visitors from the surrounding states, including South Australia and NSW.

The strength of the food and beverage industry in Mildura-Wentworth is highlighted by the high proportion of visitors dining out at restaurants and cafes on their trip, accounting for 59% of daytrip and overnight visitors.

Visitors to Mildura-Wentworth are engaging in passive experiences, such as shopping, visiting friends and relatives (VFR) and general sightseeing.

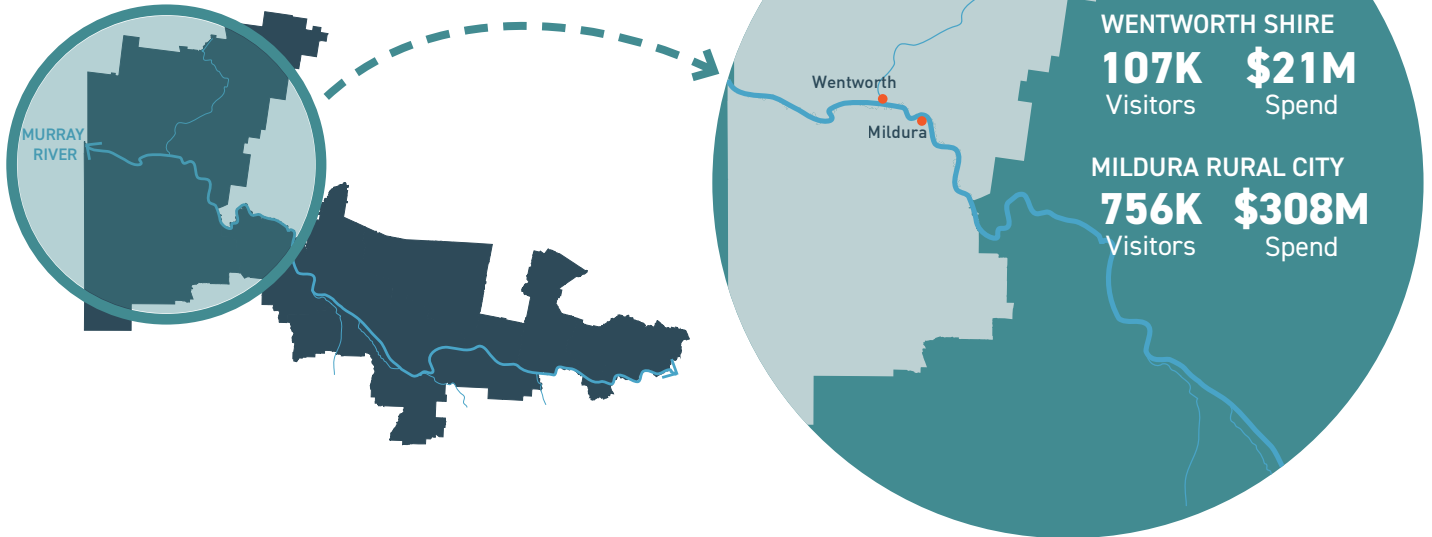
¹ Source: TRA. Visitor numbers, TRA, 2019, based on 2017-19 3 year average. Average spend per visitor, TRA LGA Profile, 2019, based on 2016-19 4 year average. Total spend, calculated by Urban Enterprise, average spend applied to visitor numbers.

VISITOR ECONOMY OVERVIEW

MILDURA-WENTWORTH

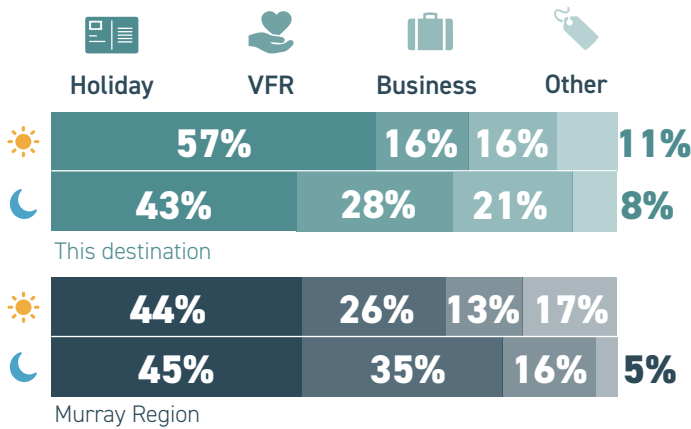
Based on Tourism Research Australia (TRA) data for Wentworth Shire and Mildura Rural City, which form this destination.

This destination ■
Murray Region ■

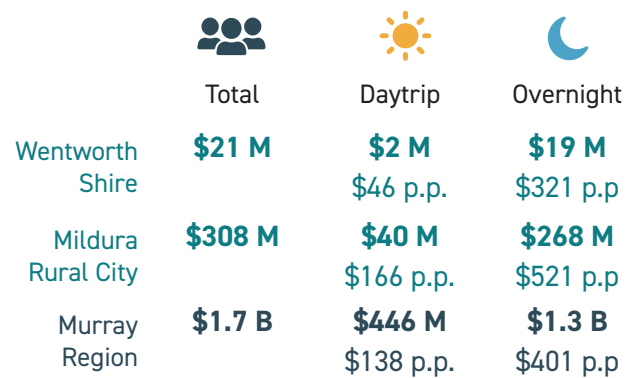


DOMESTIC VISITOR PROFILE

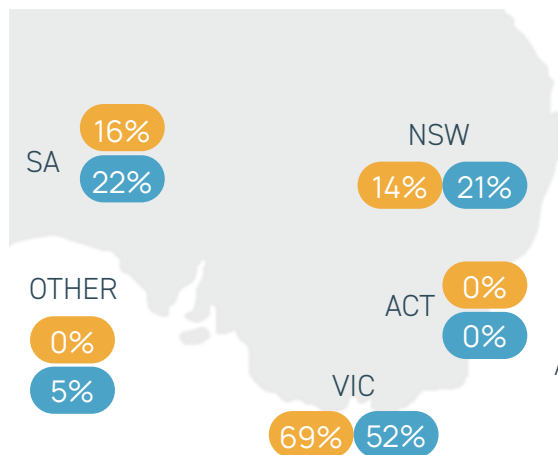
PURPOSE OF VISIT



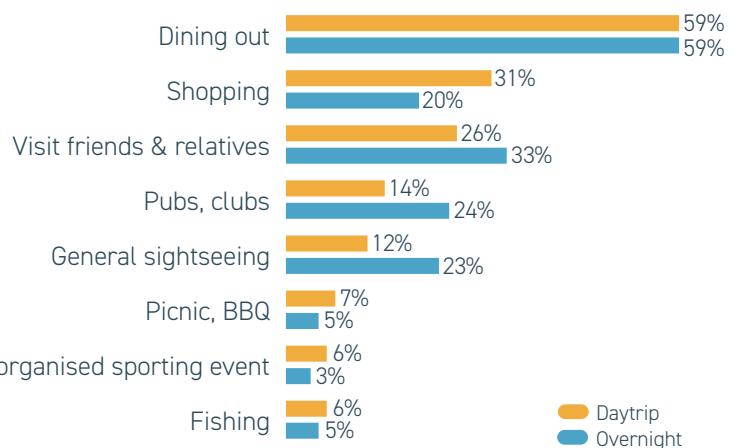
VISITOR SPEND



VISITOR ORIGIN



VISITOR ACTIVITIES



Source: Tourism Research Australia (TRA). Visitor numbers, TRA, 2019, based on 2017-19 3 year average. Average spend per visitor, TRA LGA Profile, 2019, based on 2016-19 4 year average. Total spend, calculated by Urban Enterprise, average spend applied to visitor numbers.

2.2. TARGET MARKETS

The Murray region has a market of 5.1 million Australians. This represents past and potential visitors to the region, as identified through representative market research undertaken of 2,000 Australian residents.

These are visitors that travel regularly to regional Australia (at least once every two years pre-COVID) and are highly likely to book a future trip to the Murray region.

Segmentation of the Australian market for the Murray region is shown below, which helps to identify the current and target markets for this destination, to provide a focus for investment and marketing.

Each markets alignment with this destination has been determined below.

T1. TARGET MARKET OVERVIEW

Proportion of Murray Region Target Market and Market Size				
Murray Habituals 38%	Back to Basics 8%	Road Trip 8%	Explorer and Discoverer 35%	Luxury Travellers 10%
				
1.93 Million	0.43 Million	0.40 Million	1.78 Million	0.52 Million
The traditional Murray visitor who travels to the Murray at least once every two years - the Murray's biggest advocate.	The simple traveller, the free spirit - escaping to nature to press pause on real life, spend time with loved ones, and hit reset.	Inspired by the freedom of a road trip, this market wants to explore the country, see new destinations and escape the city.	Socially conscious and adventurous travellers, open to travelling to new destinations and seeking new, unique experiences.	With a holiday mindset of indulgence, the luxury traveller seeks relaxation achieved through high quality experiences.
Strength of Market Alignment to Mildura-Wentworth and Reason for Target				
Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-sufficient travellers who typically self-cater and stay in holiday homes, caravan parks or free camping. - Stay for long trips during peak periods. - Travel in large groups, typically family groups, friend groups or multi-generational family groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High overlap in characteristics with Murray Habituals, but don't regularly visit or have a strong allegiance to the region. - Seek a relaxing nature-based experience away from the hustle and bustle of town. - Camping and caravanning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel for longer periods than other segments - opportunity to increase yield and length of stay. - Most likely to travel midweek and off peak – assist in reducing seasonality. - Opportunity for dispersal across the region as open to exploring all the Murray region's destinations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The largest market segment, predominately Millennials, not yet fully captured by the Murray region. - Young and open to new experiences, most likely to engage in a diverse range of experiences. - Want to pack their trip with activities and experiences - a key opportunity to increase visitor yield. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Critical market opportunity to grow visitor yield and support investment in more boutique offerings. - Attracted to food and wine, so growth in this sector is an opportunity to support local producers. - A shift in the perception of Murray region destinations.

Source: Murray Region Market Research, Urban Enterprise, 2022.

2.3. AWARENESS

The following section demonstrates the awareness and reputation of the Murray River and its surrounding regions through consumer research of a representative sample of 2,000 Australians, undertaken in 2022.

Awareness

Mildura is one of the Murray region's key visitor destinations, and has the highest level of awareness of all destinations in the Murray. Only 12% of the Australian population have never heard of Mildura.

In addition, 38% of the Australian population have heard of Mildura and have an interest in visiting. This highlights substantial opportunity to grow the visitor economy in Mildura.

T2. AWARENESS OF DESTINATIONS IN THE MURRAY

Destination	I have heard the name and have interest in visiting	I have never heard of this place
Albury Wodonga	29%	23%
Cobram-Barooga	28%	43%
Cohuna	21%	55%
Corowa-Wahgunyah	23%	50%
Deniliquin	26%	39%
Echuca-Moama	26%	35%
Koondrook-Barham	19%	60%
Mildura	38%	12%
Rutherglen	24%	47%
Swan Hill	36%	22%
Tocumwal	19%	55%
Wentworth	31%	33%
Yarrawonga-Mulwala	23%	47%

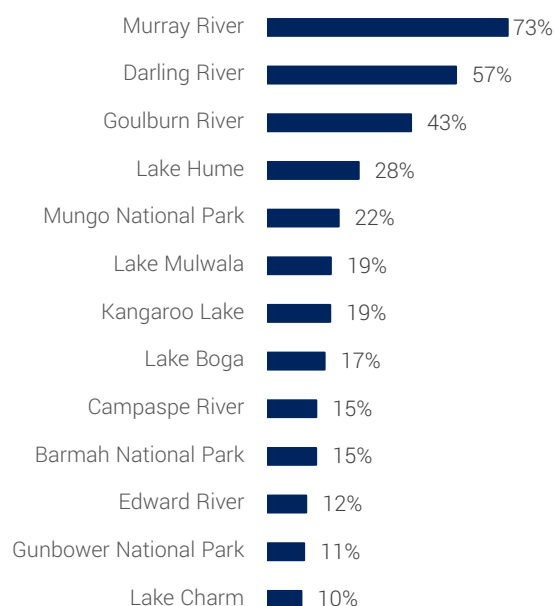
Source: Murray Region Market Research by Urban Enterprise, 2022.

Mungo National Park is of Australian and international cultural significance, yet only 22% of the Australian market have heard of it. Mildura-Wentworth are the gateway to Mungo and there are substantial opportunities to leverage from Mungo as an iconic destination.

The Murray River has the highest levels of awareness within the Australian market (73%), which highlights the importance of connection to the Murray River to strengthen destination awareness and association. However, the Murray River is a key feature of all destinations across the Murray region, therefore destinations cannot rely on the river as a point of difference.

Destinations must develop hero products and experiences to differentiate themselves from the rest of the Murray region. Mungo National Park presents a major opportunity for the region.

F3. CONSUMER AWARENESS OF MURRAY REGION NATURE-BASED ASSETS



Source: Murray Region Market Research by Urban Enterprise, 2022.

2.4. MURRAY REGION PRODUCT STRENGTHS AND MARKET ASSOCIATIONS

Murray Region Product Strengths

A number of regional product strengths within the Murray region were identified in the 2018 Murray Region DMP. These have been highlighted in the below figure.

The Murray River is the key strength of the Murray region. With this, a number of products and experiences have been developed to capitalise on this natural asset, including camping, bushwalking, water sports, fishing and river cruising and houseboating.

F4. MURRAY REGION PRODUCT STRENGTHS

Primary Strengths	Secondary Strengths
Water Sports	Nature based
Food, Wine and Produce	Business Events
Fishing	
Houseboats/River Cruise	Emerging Strengths
Golf	Indigenous
Festivals and Events	Arts and Culture
History and Heritage	Adventure

Source: Murray Region Destination Management Plan, 2018.

What is the Murray Known for?

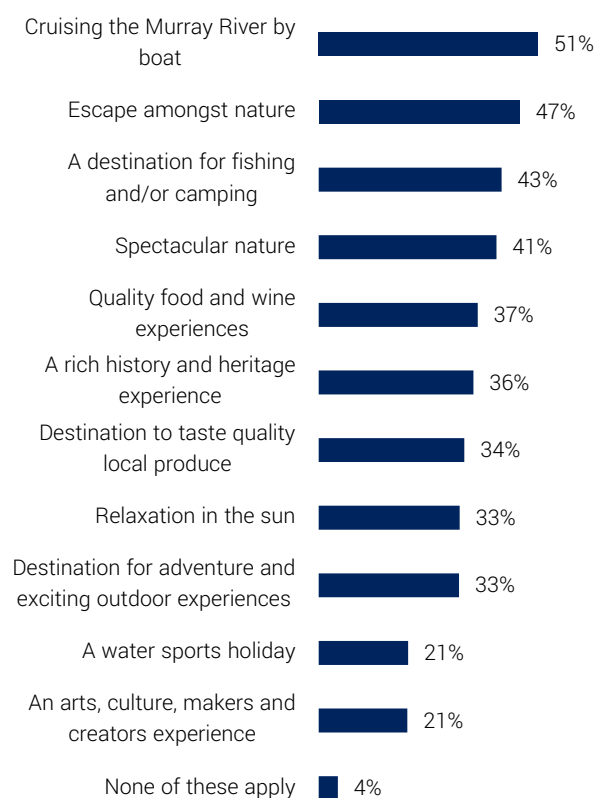
Nature-based attractions and experiences are at the core of what the Australian market perceives to be the "Murray experience".

The below figure shows the broader Australian market expects to cruise the Murray River by boat (51%), escape to nature (47%) and fish or camp (43%) when visiting the Murray region.

The broader Australian market lacks understanding of the breadth of products and experiences currently offered in the Murray region, as indicated by comparatively low perception of the Murray region as a destination for quality food and wine experiences (37%) and quality local produce (37%).

Mildura has excellent credentials for river cruising with a number of weirs that protect the water levels and provide consistent year-round cruising. In addition, there are a number of outback nature-based attractions that present a point of difference for this part of the Murray.

F5. PERCEPTION OF THE MURRAY REGION



Source: Murray Region Market Research by Urban Enterprise, 2022.

2.5. DESTINATION STRENGTHS AND UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION

Product Strengths and Potential Hero Experiences for this Destination

Mildura-Wentworth is a well-developed visitor destination that has a broad range of products and experiences.

Product strengths of Mildura-Wentworth include:

- **Food, drink and dining.** Mildura-Wentworth is one of Australia's most important food bowls. Mildura in particular has established itself as a food, drink and dining destination. Wine, distilleries and breweries compliment the food experience in the region.
- **Water based experiences.** The Murray River is well activated for private and public cruising in Mildura-Wentworth. The region is home to a large houseboat fleet and paddle steamers, as well as many private watercrafts.
- **Outback and nature-based tourism.** There are a number of outback attractions including Mungo National Park, Perry Sandhills, Murray Sunset National Park and Mallee Cliffs National Park.
- **Riverfront precinct.** The Murray Riverfront is a popular destination in Mildura and Wentworth. The riverfront parkland is a major asset for visitors to the destination.

Mildura-Wentworth Unique Selling Proposition (USP) within the Murray Region

Food, and the unique stories of local producers, are a unique feature of Mildura. The quality and diverse dining experiences of the region leverage from the commercial food producers. Products from Mildura are exported across Australia and globally, and strengthen the reputation of the area as a food bowl.

Mildura Wentworth is a place to experience food and drink culture whilst also enjoying the unique and wide-ranging nature-based assets the region has to offer.



How to build on the destination USP?

The USP needs to continue to evolve to meet market expectations, which means there is a need to deliver contemporary experiences within the heritage backdrop. This can include:

- **Facilitate development of farmgate and on-farm experiences.**
- **Continue development of night time economy.**
- **Continue to diversify dining experiences.**
- **Development of food and dining experiences in Wentworth.**
- **Deliver quality accommodation to meet the needs of luxury and high yield visitor segments.**
- **Deliver First Nations food experiences.**
- **Further elevate the story of Mungo National Park through First Nations products and experiences.**

2.6. GOVERNANCE

The table below outlines the governance structure for tourism in this destination and the responsibilities for each of the key organisations.

Local Government plays a crucial role in supporting the visitor economy, particularly in working closely with industry to support product and experience development and industry growth.

At the local level, there is significant fragmentation between the two Councils and the range of local organisations. In order to develop a strong and sustainable destination, collaboration needs to be enhanced between the bodies to work towards a shared vision and shared goals for the destination.

T3. GOVERNANCE OVERVIEW

Organisation	Overview	Activities
Destination NSW	Lead government agency for the NSW tourism and major events sectors. Major role in positioning NSW as one of the world's premier tourism events destinations, as well as achieving the NSW Government's goal of tripling visitation expenditure by 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination marketing. • Industry support and engagement. • Industry training. • Product development.
Visit Victoria	Primary tourism and events company for the State Government, involved in research, advocacy and domestic and international marketing. Visit Victoria is a key partner in promotion and strategic planning for the tourism sector. Council should maintain a strong relationship to ensure alignment with Visit Victoria marketing initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination marketing. • Industry support and engagement. • Industry training. • Product development.
Office of the NSW Cross-Border Commissioner	The Office of the Cross Border Commissioner advocates and represents cross border communities and businesses. The NSW Cross-Border Commissioner works alongside local, state and federal bodies to ensure cross-border communities and businesses are not negatively impacted by two sets of legislations and policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy. • Industry support.
Victoria's Cross Border Commissioner	Victoria's Cross Border Commissioner works with residents, businesses and community organisations along Victoria's border to identify and advocate for change. The Cross Border Commissioner also works with the Office of the NSW Cross-Border Commissioner to ensure economic and community benefits for border towns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy. • Industry support.
Department of Regional NSW	The Department of Regional NSW is a central agency for regional issues, building regional economies and communities, managing the use of regional land, and ensuring that government investment into regional NSW is fair and delivers positive outcomes for local communities and businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Economic Development Plans. • Regional Event funding. • Tourism Infrastructure Funding. • Regional Investment support. • Regional strategic planning.

Organisation	Overview	Activities
Murray Regional Tourism	The Regional Tourism Board and peak tourism organisation for the Murray region in NSW and Victoria. MRT is the lead cross boarder entity for strategic planning in the Murray region and collaborates with government and industry partners to undertake planning, marketing, product, industry and infrastructure development, and advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination marketing. • Industry support and engagement. • Product development. • Investment attraction and facilitation.
Destination Riverina Murray	DRM is one of seven Destination Networks (DNs) established by the NSW state government to represent the visitor economy in regional NSW. Its principal role is to represent and coordinate the growth and development of the NSW Riverina Murray visitor economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy. • Industry training. • Product development. • Industry support and engagement. • Investment attraction and facilitation.
Local Government <i>Mildura Rural City and Wentworth Shire Councils</i>	Councils act as enabler for the visitor economy by providing the foundations, including strategic planning, infrastructure services, assistance in product development, investment attraction, and support to the local industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy. • Visitor services. • Event attraction, facilitation and support.
Mildura City Heart	Mildura City Heart is an incorporated association with four elected board members and elected traders. The association aims to promote Mildura City and improve the overall visitor and trader experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry support and engagement. • In-region gift-card. • Industry representation. • Destination marketing. • Event facilitation and support.
Mildura Regional Development	Mildura Regional Development is the peak industry and tourism body for the Mildura region. The organisation aims to identify opportunities for the industry and foster innovation and collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination marketing. • Product development. • Investment attraction and facilitation. • Industry training. • Industry support and networking. • Industry representation.
Wentworth Regional Tourism Inc.	Wentworth Regional Tourism Incorporated aims to promote and improve visitation to Wentworth and surrounding regions. The Wentworth Regional Tourism Incorporated operates a destination website to showcase assets within the destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination marketing. • Visitor information servicing.

Organisation	Overview	Activities
Local Aboriginal Land Council <i>Dareton</i>	<p>Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALC) represent Aboriginal affairs at a local level and aim to protect the interests and further the aspirations of Aboriginal communities.</p> <p>This includes working for the return of the culturally significant and economically viable land, pursuing cultural, social and economic independence for Aboriginal people and preserving Aboriginal land rights.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land acquisition. • Establishment of commercial enterprises and community benefit schemes. • Maintenance and enhancement of Aboriginal culture, identity and heritage.
First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation <i>and</i> Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation	<p>Established to represent, make decisions and act on any matters of significance to the Latji Latji and Ngintait peoples and the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk peoples, and to enter into agreements with any person, Government agency or authority in relation to the protections of their respective Country.</p> <p>Millewa-Mallee Country is a large area covering the northern half of Mildura local government area, along the Murray River.</p> <p>Barengi Gadjin Country is a large area covering the Western region of Victoria, along the South Australian border.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy. • Land management and protection. • Building capability, resources and education for Aboriginal people.

3. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The following section examines the challenges and opportunities for this destination, which have been identified through research and engagement with local visitor economy stakeholders, and review of Council documentation.

These considerations have been used to inform the recommended actions for this destination.

T4. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Markets
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need for products and experiences to attract the younger millennial market and higher value consumers.• Need for products and experiences to service the family market and provide a reason for this market to extend their stay.• Opportunity to engage the regular travellers in new products and experiences and lift their yield.• Opportunity to increase mid-week visitation, through attraction of education and business markets.
Product, Experience and Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diversity in product offering, city feel set in the outback.• Mildura-Wentworth sits on a unique portion of the river - the junction of the Darling and Murray Rivers.• A need for restaurants and cafes to utilise and hero the abundance of fresh produce and product from the region to deliver a high-quality food experience.• Scale of the food and wine produce in Mildura.• Business and conferencing market is a major opportunity, however there is a need for larger scale conferencing facilities.• Need to activate the night time economy.• Opportunity to create a destination event to drive interstate visitation, including immersive events involving sound and light.• High demand for bookable experiences.• High demand for products and experiences for family market.• Market expectation to be able to have a nature-based experience that isn't currently available.• Untapped First Nations stories and experiences.• A need for guided tours and experiences in National and state parks.• Arts and culture hub for the region, however, lack the awareness and marketing of this asset.• Need for portable facilities to host large-scale events, including toilets, fencing, lighting and water. This can reduce the cost for events.
Accommodation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of diversity in accommodation offering. Current accommodation offering is out-dated and primarily consists of low-quality hotel and motels.• Need to match quality of accommodation with the quality of dining experiences.• Need for refurbishment of existing accommodation, as well as the development of new accommodation product that is high quality.• A need for contemporary accommodation experiences to attract/satisfy new markets, i.e. glamping, eco-cabins.• Packaging together accommodation with experiences.

Infrastructure and Planning

- Need to activate the river frontage, including increasing accessibility to the waterways through boat ramps, public pontoons and public temporary mooring points, as well as through private sector activations.
- Lack of infrastructure for growing caravanning market, including parking and dump points.
- Lack of infrastructure for house boats and private boat users, including pump out stations and public temporary moorings.
- Difficulties activating the river frontage on Victorian side of the river due to restrictions in place on Crown land.
- Drought proofing the town as climate change threats increase.
- It is difficult for visitors and the workforce to move between townships. There is need to explore public transport options such as a hop-on hop-off bus to connect townships, particularly within Mildura and Wentworth and between the two towns.
- Poor connectivity between the airport and Mildura/Wentworth. There is a need for an airport shuttle service.

Brand, Marketing and Visitor Servicing

- Historically Mildura and Wentworth have worked together poorly. Opportunity to unify the two regions.
- Unable to meet demands of high visitation on weekends leading to poor quality visitor experience.
- A need to balance visitation throughout the year.
- Opportunity for Councils to share events calendars in order to disperse visitation throughout the region and seasonality of visitors.
- Visitors to the region are unaware of what there is to do when visiting the region.
- Outdated and sparse visitor signage and wayfinding points.
- Unclear brand/identity for the destination, and confusion of brands (e.g. Sunraysia, Mildura-Wentworth).
- Integrating the smaller towns to the overall brand of the region e.g. Bright and Surrounds.
- Unclear roles and responsibilities for tourism development and marketing.
- Increase digital presence of businesses is needed.
- Increase local knowledge of the destination.
- Encourage visitor services, i.e. supermarket and pharmacy operators, to become ambassadors for the region.

Industry Development and Workforce

- A need to reengage and reconnect the industry post covid.
 - Encourage business ownership of the industry and take pride in their product.
 - Continue to work through governance challenges.
 - Identify opportunities for Councils and Mildura Regional Development to better engage with industry and support businesses through challenging times.
 - Highly variable visitation makes it difficult to employ and retain the right number of staff (i.e. too many staff mid-week, not enough staff on weekends).
 - Labour shortages in terms of both skilled and unskilled workers. Need to attract backpackers to the region, encouraging them to work and play in the region.
 - Gaps in school-based curriculum. The industry operates differently to how it is taught in school-based settings.
 - Lack of accommodation to support attraction and retention of workforce.
 - Reliance on volunteers has major impact on events, particularly post covid change in volunteerism.
 - Lack of volunteers to support events delivery, which impacts the viability and long-term sustainability of events.
 - Opportunity to incentivise community members to encourage volunteerism.
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4. RECOMMENDED ACTION PLAN

READING THIS ACTION PLAN

Recommended actions have emerged as a result of consultation with industry and local government stakeholders during the Local Area Plan workshops, an assessment of existing local documents and strategies, and in response to considerations for tourism development.

The following provides a guide for interpreting the Recommended Action Plan.

Recommended Actions

Each of the recommended actions have been identified in response to the key considerations for tourism development in this destination, and aim to address visitor economy needs and opportunities over the next 5 years.

It is the role of key stakeholders to further investigate the viability and opportunity of each project.

Suggested Next Steps

The identified next steps are a suggestion to enable stakeholders to take forward the recommended actions.

The next steps are to be used as a guide, and will be informed by local resourcing and priorities.

Priority

The priority level for each of the recommended actions have been identified by determining their level of importance, logical staging, as well as which actions can be achieved relatively quickly.

The following priority levels have been used:

Short-term within 1 year	Medium-term 1-3 years	Long-term 4-5 years +
Ongoing		

Key Partners

Key partners have been identified for each of the recommended actions. Current roles and responsibilities of these stakeholders are identified in the Destination Snapshot section of this document.

Key partners include:

- Murray Regional Tourism
- Destination Riverina Murray
- State and Federal Governments and agencies, including:
 - Regional Development Victoria
 - Department of Regional NSW
 - Goulburn Murray Water
 - Murray–Darling Basin Authority
 - Parks Victoria (Parks Vic)
 - NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services
 - VicRoads
 - Transport for NSW
 - Public Transport Victoria
- Local Government agencies, including:
 - Mildura Rural City Council (Mildura RCC)
 - Wentworth Shire Council (Wentworth SC)
 - Mildura Regional Development
- Industry

4.1. PRODUCT, EXPERIENCE AND EVENTS

T5. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p>Cruising Experience Investment</p> <p>Refer to the Murray Cruising Strategy for key project opportunities. Specific needs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Luxury, multi-day cruises - Additional houseboat offering - Water equipment hire locations - Water taxi's - Paddle sports hubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council and stakeholders to facilitate cruising investment. - Work with existing cruise operators to elevate offering and address barriers to operation. 	<p>Industry</p> <p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Night-Time Economy Activation Plan</p> <p>Mildura-Wentworth is a well-developed destination however lacks a week-round, year-round night time economy, including lighting, busking and live music at venues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with local industry to develop plan and activations. - Continue to progress Powerhouse precinct as a core night-time economy offering. 	<p>Industry</p> <p>MRD</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Product and Experience Packaging</p> <p>Educate industry on the importance of product packaging to attract high yield markets and extend spend and length of stay and facilitate connections between industry to enhance collaboration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Industry networking led to develop packaging opportunities. 	<p>Industry</p> <p>MRD</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>5-Star Hotel and Conference Centre</p> <p>Five-star hotel and conferencing facilities to attract the business and conference market supported by large high quality visitor accommodation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unlock site opportunities and promote to key investment targets. 	<p>Councils</p> <p>MRD</p> <p>Investors</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Streamlined Events Calendar</p> <p>There is a need to review and develop a cross border approach to the events calendar.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake an events sector review. 	<p>Councils</p> <p>Industry</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Waterfront Food, Drink and Entertainment Activation</p> <p>Support attraction of waterfront dining and entertainment establishments to activate both sides of the riverfront and provide contemporary experiences, building on recommendations of the Mildura Riverfront Masterplan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council should facilitate investment by identifying suitable sites, with consideration of suitable zoning / need for rezoning. - Promote the opportunity to a developer and facilitate planning process. 	<p>Councils</p> <p>Industry</p>	<p>Short term</p>

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p>Strategic Plan for Willandra Lakes and Mungo National Park</p> <p>Increase sustainability of Willandra Lakes and Mungo National Park as visitor destinations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of a visitor-related strategic plan for Willandra Lakes and Mungo National Park. 	<p>Councils</p> <p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> <p>NPWS</p> <p>Traditional Owners</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Arts Destination</p> <p>There is an abundance of arts and culture assets within Mildura. Work with industry to activate this market and become known as an art and culture hub, extending across visual arts, exhibitions, installations, public art opportunities, as well as performing arts, entertainment and music events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attract arts and culture experiences to the region, including visual arts, exhibitions, installations, public art opportunities, as well as performing arts, entertainment and music events. 	<p>Industry</p> <p>MRD</p> <p>Mildura RCC</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p>Indigenous Experience Development</p> <p>Support Traditional owners to develop unique indigenous cultural experiences, building on the strength of the existing offering such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cruise and dining under the stars. - Cultural heritage tours integrated with on-land experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote cruising and other cultural experience offerings. 	<p>Dareton LALC</p> <p>First People of the Millewa-Mallee</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>MRD</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p>Mildura Riverfront Precinct and Cultural Centre</p> <p>The Mildura Riverfront Masterplan was undertaken and provides direction for enhancement and utilisation of this important asset.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to progress the proposed cultural and visitor centre within the riverfront precinct. 	<p>Mildura RCC</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p>Motor Sports Complex and Facilities</p> <p>Refurbishment of existing facilities and infrastructure to improve the visitor experience and increase utilisation of the site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a community motorsport strategy for the next 5 years. 	<p>Councils</p> <p>MRD</p>	<p>Medium term</p>

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
Murray Winter Night Time Events			
<p>Delivery of signature, region-wide cultural events in the off-peak (i.e. winter). There is opportunity for this to be a unique sequence of events within the context of Australia, providing an accessible and contemporary back to nature experience, incorporating Aboriginal stories and experiences in the unique Murray setting. The event direction needs to be set by MRT, and local event direction to be determined by Council's in collaboration with MRT and industry.</p> <p>Mildura-Wentworth to leverage on the food, produce and outback positioning to create a unique winter event.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MRT to support the development and promotion of events. - Councils to allocate funding to local event. - Work with Traditional Owners and private operators to develop the event concept and program. - Identify grant opportunities and seek funding from state government agencies to support the event. 	<p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> <p>Industry</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
Nature Based Destination Development			
<p>There are a number of nature-based destinations that need infrastructure, visitor facility and accommodation investment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with Parks Victoria and Parks NSW to identify infrastructure, experience and product development and experience needs (e.g. tours). 	<p>Parks Vic</p> <p>NPWS</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
"On Farm" Experiences			
<p>Mildura-Wentworth is rich in produce, with an abundance of local growers and makers. Promote local produce by supporting development of farm open days, on-farm experiences and farm gates, and paddock to plate dining experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MRT to share agri-tourism research and recommendations with industry through further engagement with the sector. 	<p>Local producers</p> <p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
Mildura Amphitheatre Activation			
<p>Redevelopment of the amphitheatre to host outdoor concerts and live music events as part of delivering upon the Riverfront Masterplan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake consultation regarding the amphitheatre. - Undertake designs to redevelop the amphitheatre based on community consultation. 	<p>Mildura RCC</p> <p>MRD</p>	<p>Long term</p>
Theme Park/Family Attraction			
<p>The family market needs to be the focus for product development in order to attract this market back to Mildura. This will help to strengthen the region in the future for return visits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote the attraction of a family orientated visitor experience. 	<p>Industry</p> <p>MRD</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Long term</p>
Accommodation Investment			
<p>Refer to the Murray Region Accommodation Study for project details to attract investment in the identified priority projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High-End Boutique Hotel, Mildura - Tourist Park, Wentworth - Redevelopment of motel accommodation - Investment in nature based and eco accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council should facilitate investment by identifying suitable sites, with consideration of suitable zoning / need for rezoning. - Promote the opportunity to a developer and facilitate planning process. 	<p>Industry</p> <p>MRD</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p>Existing Accommodation Refurbishment</p> <p>Refurbishment of existing the accommodation stock to meet the expectations of the existing and potential visitor market. This includes the refurbishment of tourist parks and motels. Refer to the Murray Region Accommodation Study for project details.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Councils to assist accommodation owners through the planning and funding application process. - Promote the opportunity for developers to refurbish out-dated accommodation. 	<p>Industry</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>MRD</p>	Ongoing
<p>Murray River Adventure Trail</p> <p>Investment in the Murray River Adventure Trail is underway across the Murray region. Some stages have been funded, however there is further design and construction work required to deliver on Stage Two and Three of the trail.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with MRT and relevant stakeholders to develop, design and advocate for funding of Stages Two and Three of the Murray River Adventure Trail. 	<p>Councils</p> <p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> <p>Parks Vic</p> <p>NPWS</p>	Ongoing

4.2. INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING

T6. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p>Mungo National Park All Weather Road Deliver an all-weather road to Mungo National Park.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete feasibility study and business case for the all-weather road. - Advocate for investment. 	<p>Wentworth SC Transport for NSW</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Mooring and Wharf Infrastructure Support access to locations along the Murray River, including Perry Sandhills and other nature-based assets. Investigate expansion of Mildura Wharf to allow for additional commercial operators to utilise the asset (as noted in Murray Cruising Strategy).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop designs for increased mooring provision around Mildura and Wentworth and expand the Mildura wharf. 	<p>Councils GMW MDBA</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p>Visitor Servicing infrastructure Improve infrastructure to support visitors. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EV Charging Stations. - RV Dump points (building on MRCC RV Strategy). - Houseboat pump out stations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a plan to identify locations for visitor services infrastructure. 	<p>Councils</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p>Access and Transport Advocacy Advocacy to State Government to improve reliability and consistency of train services from Melbourne and improve access to and between towns through a regular public transport service, as well as a bus services to and from the airport. This includes advocacy for the Interstate Rail Connectivity Project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake population and visitation modelling to provide a strong case for upgrades. 	<p>PTV VicRoads Transport for NSW Councils</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p>Infrastructure Servicing Services infrastructure to allow new development and business investment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address water pressure constraints for new development. - Mobile network and coverage / NBN. - Sewerage and water capacity where required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with servicing authorities to deliver required infrastructure. 	<p>Servicing authorities Councils</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p>Advocacy to Address Housing Crisis Continued advocacy to State and Federal Government to address housing crisis, and local level support to key partners to meet required demand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MRT and Councils to work with regional stakeholders to quantify housing needs. - Facilitate initiatives that will support delivery of housing to meet required demand. 	<p>MRT DRM RDV DRNSW Councils</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

4.3. BRAND, MARKETING AND VISITOR SERVICING

T7. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p>Bookable Product and Packaging</p> <p>There are limited online bookable products in this destination. This presents an opportunity to increase length of stay and improve visitor experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop bookable product and product packages including accommodation and dining packages. 	<p>Industry</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>MRD</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Cross-Border Brand Strategy</p> <p>Review of the existing brands and development of a brand strategy that unifies the two.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a cross border brand strategy. 	<p>Councils</p> <p>MRD</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Cross-Border Marketing Plan</p> <p>Review current approaches to marketing and develop a new cross border marketing plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a cross border marketing plan. 	<p>Councils</p> <p>MRD</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Remarketing of the Murray Darling Wine Region</p> <p>Through remarketing of the region, develop the Murray Darling Wine Region into a premium wine region to increase visitation to and awareness of the wine region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver a strategy to elevate the Murray Darling Wine Region brand. 	<p>Wine Industry</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Visitor Information Review and Delivery</p> <p>Undertake a visitor information and signage review across the two Councils, and prepare a strategy to deliver the following needs as one destination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signage (wayfinding and tourism) – building on the MRCC signage and wayfinding audit. - Gateway enhancements and interventions. - Visitor information touchpoints throughout the visitor journey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a visitor information services review across the two Councils. 	<p>Councils</p> <p>MRD</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p>Murray Region Local Ambassador Project</p> <p>MRT to develop a region-wide program to encourage local knowledge of and local pride in the tourism industry. This should include ongoing initiatives that aim to educate local industry and residents about the product offering and events, including notification of new business, events and promotional activities to create engagement. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incentive system for residents and industry to engage in tourism offerings and promote through social media. - MRT branded business swap card system to encourage cross-business promotion and visitor information. - Local area tourism industry communication framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MRT to develop and deliver plan. - Councils to deliver actions at local level. 	<p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>Industry</p> <p>MRD</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

4.4. INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE

T8. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
Governance			
Undertake an industry governance review for the broader region to identify an improved approach for industry collaboration, branding and marketing.	- Deliver governance outcomes.	Industry Councils	Short term
Regional Workforce Pathways and Promotion Program			
MRT to develop and implement a framework that promotes the attractiveness of the tourism industry and attracts new workforce. The program should be twofold:		MRT DRM MRD	
- Work in the Murray promotion to attract new tourism industry workforce (think Want To Work in Paradise promotion from Tourism Queensland). This should consider non-monetary incentives for new workers to the region.	- MRT to develop a regional workforce skills gap analysis and campaigns. - MRT to work with local Councils and other stakeholders (jobs boards, employment networks etc) to promote opportunities.	Councils Secondary schools Higher education Employment networks	Short term and Ongoing
- Development of pathways program to attract and retain staff, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Attraction of secondary students. o Communication of clear progression pathways within and between business. o Encouraging use of staff sharing platform to provide consistency of work. 			
Skills Development Plan			
Using the outcomes of the regional workforce gap analysis and feedback from industry, collaborate with TAFE's, higher education providers and employment networks to deliver tailored and location-based industry training solutions.	- Undertake workshop with industry, employers and employment networks to identify specific skill and training needs. - Work with higher education providers to develop courses and course material.	Councils Industry MRT DRM Higher education TAFEs	Short term and Ongoing

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Regional Documents

- Murray Regional Tourism Annual Report 2019-20
- Murray Regional Tourism Strategic Plan 2021-24
- Murray Region Destination Management Plan 2018-2022
- Murray Region Cruising Strategy 2022
- Murray Region Accommodation Study 2022
- Murray Region Consumer Research 2022
- RDA Murray Strategic Plan 2019
- NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030
- Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan 2023-30
- Riverina Murray Accommodation Market Assessment 2019

Mildura Rural City Council

- Mildura Regional Development Strategic Plan 2021-2024
- Mildura Rural City Council Event Strategy 2025
- Mildura Riverfront Stage 2 Final Masterplan 2019
- Mildura Rural City Council Visitor Servicing Strategy 2025
- Powerhouse Place Digital Activation Project 2021

Wentworth Shire Council

- Sustainable Wentworth Strategy 2016
- Dareton Revitalised Strategy 2021
- Buronga Gol Gol Structure Plan Report 2020

