

THE MURRAY REGION EXPERIENCES RAPID GROWTH IN DOMESTIC VISITATION

The latest National Visitor Survey results released by Tourism Research Australia show that domestic day trip and domestic overnight visitors spent a combined \$1.6 billion in the Murray Region in the year to March 2018. With game-changing projects in the pipeline, Murray Regional Tourism believes these results are the fruits of the strong collaboration between our local government partners, industry and tourism associations.

The Murray region's domestic results continue to be extremely solid: with a total of 2.8 million domestic overnight visitors (+6.6%) spending 7.8 million nights (+5.2%) and \$1.2 billion dollars (+12.6%) in the region for the year ending March 2018. An additional 3 million (+13.6%) domestic daytrip travellers spent an additional \$402 million dollars (+20.4%).

Taking a longer-term view, these results represent a significant 22.1% increase of domestic overnight visitors to the Murray region since March 2014.

Chair of the Murray Regional Tourism Board, Wendy Greiner, says that the tourism sector in our region has never been stronger with nearly 20 per cent of people employed in the region working in tourism. "At Murray Regional Tourism, we take these domestic results as both an encouragement and a challenge."

"Encouragement to continue our successful cross border collaboration and leadership across this huge region – from Albury-Wodonga to Mildura and Wentworth. But, also a challenge to be tenacious in realising the game changing projects highlighted in our recently released Murray Region Destination Management Plan," Ms Greiner said.

Three such game-changing projects that MRT are pursuing are the Murray River Road, Ports of Murray and the Murray River Adventure Trail.

"This growth is the result of our team and our partners Visit Victoria, Destination New South Wales, Destination Riverina Murray, Regional Tourism Associations and the 13 local government areas working together with operators to improve the experiences on offer, events, digital presence and customer service."

"Many domestic visitors come to the Murray region to visit friends and relatives, and so the communities along the river play an important role in these results, too. It is really pleasing to see across all of the sub-destinations that there has been growth achieved in one or more of the key metrics: total overnight visitors, visitor nights or day visitors," Ms Greiner said.

Each sub-destination enjoyed strong results, including:

- Albury / Wodonga received 740,000 domestic overnight visitors (+7.8% on YE March 17), visitors stayed nearly 1.8 million nights (+10.6%) and spent an estimated \$264 million in the region. This is an additional injection of \$73 million dollars over the previous year.
- 'Eating out, dine at a restaurant or café' (66.1%) continues to be the most popular activity undertaken when visiting Albury Wodonga, followed by 'visiting friends and relatives' (36.9%) and 'pubs, clubs, discos etc' (32.1%).

- The Sun Country received 610,000 visitors (+30,000 visitors or +12%) with these visitors spending 1.8 million nights in the area (+1.2%).
- 'Holiday' was the main purpose of visitors coming to the Sun Country area (52.3%) and domestic overnight visitors spent \$261 million in the area during this time. This is an additional injection of \$30 million dollars over the previous year.
- Echuca Moama's 789,000 domestic overnight visitors spent \$287 million in the area, and the most popular activities included 'eating out' (54.8 %) and visiting friends and relatives (40.6%).
- Swan Hill received 387,000 visitors (+8.2%) with these visitors spending 919,000 nights in the area. Domestic overnight visitors spent \$148 million in the area - an average of \$161 per night.
- Mildura Wentworth received 494,000 domestic overnight visitors, and visitors spent nearly 1.3 million nights (+1.2%) and \$204 million dollars in the area.
- Whilst Victoria and NSW continue to be the leading origins for visitors to Mildura Wentworth, the number of visitors from South Australia increased by 27%.

Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) works in partnership with Visit Victoria, Destination New South Wales, Destination Riverina Murray, 13 Local Government areas and Regional Tourism to grow the visitor economy across the Murray region.

ENDS

Media enquiries:

Chatterbox Marketing - 0419 101 579 - media@chatterboxmarketing.com.au

BACKGROUND : ABOUT MURRAY REGIONAL TOURISM (MRT)

Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) works in partnership with Visit Victoria, Destination New South Wales, Destination Riverina Murray, 13 local government areas and Regional Tourism Associations to grow the visitor economy across the Murray region.

Website: <http://www.murrayregionaltourism.com.au>

BACKGROUND : NATIONAL VISITOR SURVEY

The National Visitor Survey (NVS) is a large-scale telephone survey which has been conducted continuously since January 1998, and is designed to measure domestic and outbound travel by Australian residents. The NVS is funded by the Commonwealth Government, and state and territory governments under the auspices of the Australian Standing Committee on Tourism (ASCOT).

NVS concepts and definitions are based on those developed by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

BACKGROUND : KEY STATS FOR OVERALL REGION

All figures are for the year ending March 2018.

- A total of 2.8 million domestic overnight visitors (+6.6%) spending 7.8 million nights (+5.2%) and \$1.2 billion (+12.6%) in the region for the year ending March 2018.
- An additional 3 million (+13.6%) domestic daytrip travellers spent \$402 million (+20.4%).
- Two thirds of the region's domestic visitors came from Victoria, 21.2% from New South Wales and 7% from South Australia. (The remaining 5.6% were from other states and territories).
- Domestic daytrippers and domestic overnight visitors spent a combined \$1.6 billion.
- The number of Domestic day trip visitors has once again leapt ahead of Domestic Overnight visitors, after a 13.6% increase in the year. However, these visitors spent around one third in our region as the domestic overnight visitors.
- Daytrippers and domestic overnight visitors spent a combined \$1.6 billion.