



# Murray River Road

A new Australian tourism icon

Murray Regional Tourism Board [www.murrayregionaltourism.com.au](http://www.murrayregionaltourism.com.au)  
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## Vision

To transform awareness and understanding of the Murray River by engaging people with the experiences of the river and surrounding region; to reposition the Murray River as a major destination for tourists and travellers; and to build the health and prosperity of the river communities.

## Project proponents

Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) unites the Murray region's tourism industry, creating memorable and complementary visitor experiences throughout this beautiful river destination.

MRT was established in November 2010 in partnership with Destination NSW, Visit Victoria and local government councils in the Murray. Since the NSW Government local council amalgamations there are now 13 local government councils in the Murray region.

Providing an overarching tourism strategy, a clear developmental direction, focused product development and support for infrastructure, MRT has set about realising its goal of making the Murray a must-visit destination for local and international visitors alike.

Through energetic, cohesive leadership, MRT improves the supply and quality of tourism experiences and increases awareness of destinations, products, experiences and events within the region for our member councils and the region's tourism industry.



## The region

The Murray River is Australia's longest river and the world's third longest navigable river after the Nile and the Amazon. The river flows 2508 kilometers from the mountains of the Australian Alps to the Southern Ocean in South Australia.

The Murray River is recognised as Australia's national iconic river. It is an area with a rich indigenous heritage and was pivotal to opening up inland Australia after colonisation. It is an environmental asset of national significance, and features internationally recognised habitats along its course.



## The project

Imagine if we could pioneer a brand new tourism experience in Australia that gives rise to the world's next Route 66?

Imagine an uninterrupted corridor traversing more than 2500 kilometres of breathtaking scenery through our nation's southern reaches.

An experience rich in 19th-century romance, representing the vast diversity of people and landscapes that line its path. A passage sheathed by ancient river red gums, natural wetlands, top-class restaurants, wineries, cafes, pubs, golf-courses and tourist attractions. A destination that could become the next 'experience of a lifetime' for travellers, explorers and dreamers around the world.

And now imagine that it already exists ... because it does ... along the mighty Murray River.

The Murray River Road encompasses an untapped travelling route alongside the mighty Murray River. It has the potential to significantly change the mindset of visitors, positioning the Murray River as an aspirational travel destination to be ticked off the bucket list. Visitors can eat, drink, camp, paddle, golf, drive or boat their way along the entire stretch of the Murray - beginning where the river rises in the Australian Alps and ending where it meets the ocean at Lake Alexandrina. The route can be conquered in one single adventure, or spread out into sections to navigate across the years.



## Murray visitor economy indicators

- **Direct expenditure:** \$1.4 billion
- **Direct and indirect expenditure:** \$2.1 billion
- **Estimated FTE jobs:** 24,112
- **Tourism sector employment contribution:** 17% (direct and indirect)
- **Total visitors to the region:** 5.3 million (year ending March 2017)
- **Total visitor nights:** 8.7 million (year ending March 2017)



## Marketing strategic focus

The Murray River Road aims to create a link between major offerings along the river. By creating a link – a relationship – between these key destinations, visitors will be encouraged to sample the next experience, to see what’s next ... what’s around the bend, so to speak.

In much the same way as people travel Route 66 in the U.S. or drive the Great Ocean Road in coastal Victoria, we want people to see the Murray River Road as a journey - rather than a destination. There’s no reason why we can’t have international visitors to Australia saying, “You can’t do Australia without spending a week or two along the Murray River Road.”

The Murray River Road will be a premium destination for tourists, and allow coordinated and integrated marketing of the overall journey, the main destinations along the route, and key offerings and experiences found at those locations. This creates a relationship between all parts of the whole.

Surrounding communities in the region will have the opportunity to leverage off visitation to these “Hero River Experiences” to disperse visitors into other off-river destinations.

## The marketing challenge

There is a need to encourage visitors to travel along the Murray, rather than across it. In the past, visitors have experienced the river at their favourite or most familiar locations. They go to the same spots – often repeatedly – out of habit (“We always go to Yarrowonga to ski”), or they go to a particular destination for particular reasons (“We went to Echuca to see the paddle steamers”).

What they don’t do (at the moment) is travel along the river. Visitors continue to interact with the river in the ways they know; they are not experiencing or being exposed to anything new.

Markets need to change. The current market is aging and those younger visitors are singular destination visitors. There is a need to engage with a younger audience as well as those from more diverse cultural backgrounds.

## The solution

To develop and inspire a journey of adventure anchored along the entire length of the river from one end to the other, and to do so in a charming, unique and authentic manner.



# Murray River Road



## Our opportunity

To showcase the natural beauty and charm of the region and its appealing offerings to new national and international markets.

This includes Australian migrants and younger hipster markets; welcoming them to engage, create, capture and share their adventures in our region.

## The evolving journey to date

The Murray Region Destination Management Plan calls for an investigation into how to link the region's offerings and present them to market.

It was paramount that this included the region's pioneering river history, through to today's modern and boutique offerings, in a way that will appeal to new and emerging markets.

MRT has initiated the development of the Murray River Road concept as a focal project in achieving the aims of the Murray Region Destination Management Plan.



## Achieving the vision

MRT has identified the Murray River Road project as a game changer and want to share this opportunity with our partners. Through this exciting initiative, MRT aims to broaden its holistic approach to promoting the Murray by including South Australia – thereby truly reflecting the whole of the Murray region – and developing brand new marketing opportunities and target markets that will cement the Murray as a national icon in Australia’s tourism landscape.

MRT is responsible for regional brand definition, positioning and awareness and has taken the lead on developing the project. The Murray River Road will be a tactical extension of the Murray region brand, with a strong retail focus to drive visitation and increase length of stay to the region. MRT will enable the three state governments and LGAs to partner in executing the overall marketing program. The LGAs will remain responsible for identifying and aligning local initiatives under the Murray River Road campaign umbrella.



## Underlying project drivers

- Current visitors to the region are aging, and younger markets tend to be single-location visitors.
- There is a notable lack of awareness of the region’s destinations and their offerings
- Need to establish a new Australian tourism icon for the domestic market
- Need to create a new product within the Australian tourism market for international visitors
- Identify an ‘in-region’ approach that encourages visitors to explore more of the region from within the region (leveraging the current market)
- Encourage visitors to spend longer in the region through a greater emphasis on ‘connectivity’ (one place connects with the next, and that connector is the river)
- Identifying the Murray within the Australian domestic market as a ‘destination’ to discover in whole, or in parts (an aspirational travel goal to tick off the bucket list)



## Project stakeholders

- Murray Regional Tourism Board (lead)
- Local governments (VIC, NSW and SA)
- State governments (VIC, NSW and SA)
- Federal government, specifically Tourism Australia and Regional Development Australia
- Industry operators



## Need for a brand

It was identified that a cool and edgy retail brand name and logo device is required to create greater appeal and awareness to our region and offerings, and position us as a must-do destination.

## Researching for a name

We researched the target markets and secured valuable insights that presented us with a road map direction for both name and brand personality development. It became clear that we were seeking a name that speaks to an array of people and positions the region as a journey of adventure that is authentic.

## Our name 'The Murray River Road'

It says what is it and where it is. A river; a road. And it implicitly projects the idea that there is a journey and adventures to be had.

## Positioning statement

An authentic Australian road trip adventure has never been offered to the market, yet 'adventure' is the number one life genre all target markets romantically and enthusiastically seek.

## Our brand logo

A visual where the river and the road become one and are embraced in a timeless style portraying the journey's natural charm ... resulting in a logo that is truly 'genuine and authentic'.

## Brand personality

The market seeks out authentic cool brands that they want to be a part of. The Murray River's history and boutique offerings are genuine and authentic, and that's seriously cool.

We see and hear a brand that inspires the escapism of a road trip with that wind-in-your-hair sense of adventure. It's life stripped back to what matters; a journey for lovers, family and friends. It's engaging with the raw and real natural beauty of the river, the wildlife and people.

## Contact

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## Next steps

MRT is seeking endorsement for the project concept and investment to advance the project. A partnership approach across the three states – Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales – along with the affiliated riverside LGAs, would enable the launch of a comprehensive marketing campaign to fully realise the potential of the Murray River Road. A sustained long term marketing investment is needed to affect change in perceptions of the Murray and deliver significant positive outcomes for the region.

