

FEBRUARY 2023



SWAN HILL 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
LAP	Local Area Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
MDBA	Murray-Darling Basin Authority
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 2023-27 (available [here](#)) and NSW Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan 2023-30. 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 Swan Hill. This includes the destinations in proximity, as described in Section 1.

ANNUAL VISITOR ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

491K

Visitors

\$125M

Spend

UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION WITHIN THE MURRAY REGION

The one aspect that is somewhat unique about Swan Hill is the unregulated natural waterway, which makes it popular for fishing and paddle sports.



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"> Chisholm Reserve Motorsport Complex Cruising Experience Investment Development of the Mallee Almond Blossom Festival First Nations Experience Riverside Splash Park Signature Events Calendar Waterfront Activation Precinct "On Farm" Experiences Lake Boga Active Trail Pental Island Aboriginal Tourism Experience Family Friendly Attractions Accommodation Investment Murray River Adventure Trail Link to Lake Tyrrell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amenity to Service Campers Sporting Infrastructure Swan Hill Streetscape Access and Transport Advocacy Infrastructure Servicing Water Access Infrastructure Advocacy to Address Housing Crisis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bookable Product and Packaging Marketing Plan Visitor Information Review and Delivery Murray Region Local Ambassador Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Workforce Pathways and Promotion Program Skills Development Plan Digital Literacy for Operators Weekend Trading

1. SWAN HILL LOCAL AREA PLAN

1.1. THIS PROJECT

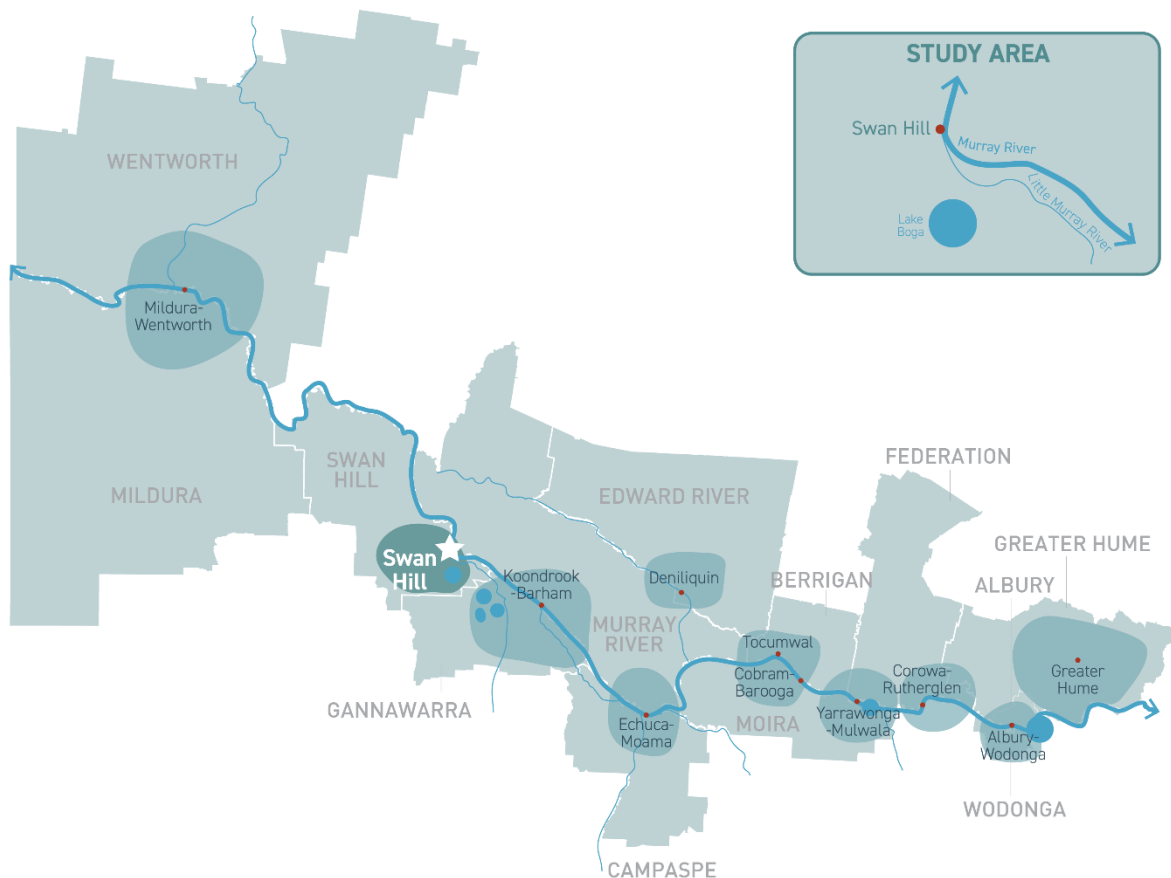
Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) and Destination Riverina Murray (DRM) have prepared Local Area Plans (Plan) for 10 of the Murray region’s prominent destinations, as shown in the map below.

These are strategic documents that capture local aspirations and directions at a high-level to inform the Murray Region Destination Management Plan (DMP) 2023-27 and the NSW Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan 2023-30. 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 Swan Hill. 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 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 15 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 Swan Hill 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 the Swan Hill Local Government Area.

OVERVIEW

Swan Hill attracts an average of 491,000 visitors, accounting for 8% of total visitation to the Murray region.

Visitation to this destination is primarily driven by daytrip visitors (51%), who spend approximately \$51 million in the region per annum. Daytrip visitors to Swan Hill are relatively high yielding (\$199 per person) when compared to the average for the Murray region (\$138 per person). This is likely due to a large number of day-trippers travelling to Swan Hill for shopping, health care and other services from within the broader region.

Although accounting for a smaller proportion of total visitation, overnight visitors to Swan Hill generate greater expenditure than daytrip visitors (\$74.2 million), with an average visitor spend of \$313 per person per trip, which is lower than the Murray day-trip visitors (\$401 per person).

DOMESTIC VISITOR PROFILE

Domestic visitation to Swan Hill is primarily driven by holiday and leisure travellers, accounting for 35% of daytrip visitors and 44% of overnight visitors. The region also attracts a smaller number of visiting friends and relatives (VFR) visitors (22% of day trip and 26% of overnight visitation).

Due to Swan Hill's role as a service centre for the wider region, the town attracts a high proportion of daytrip visitors for other reasons (24%), which likely includes activities such as medical services, personal appointments, entertainment and shopping.

Visitors engage in a variety of activities whilst visiting the destination, including dining out at restaurants and cafes, shopping, visiting pubs and clubs and visiting museums or heritage attractions.

There is also high engagement with passive activities, including VFR, general sightseeing and fishing. These activities are generally low yielding and contribute to the overall low visitor spend in the destination.

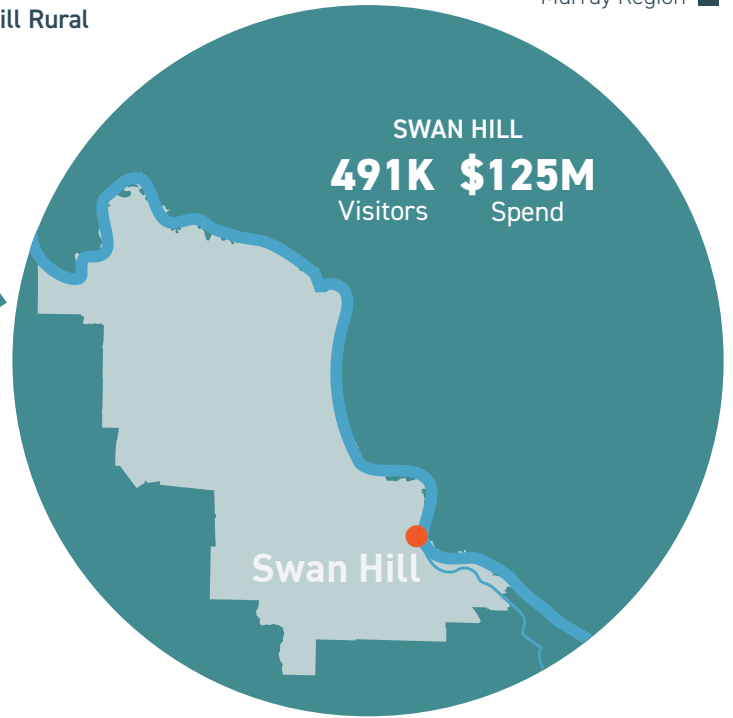
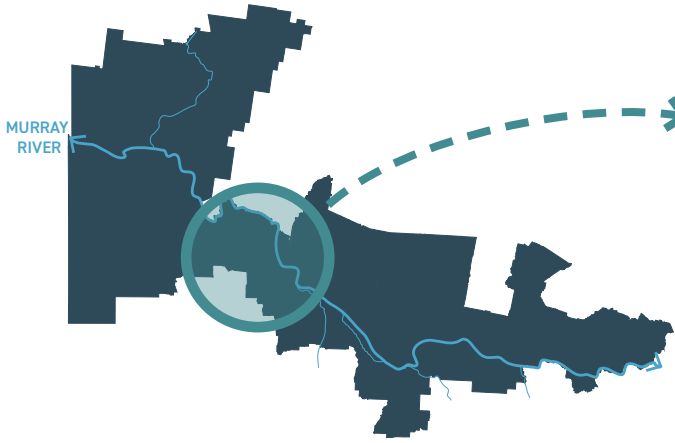
¹ Source: TRA. Visitor numbers, TRA, 2019, based on 2017-19 3 year average. Average spend per visitor, TRA LGA Profile, 2019, based on 2016-19 4 year average. Total spend, calculated by Urban Enterprise, average spend applied to visitor numbers.

VISITOR ECONOMY OVERVIEW

SWAN HILL

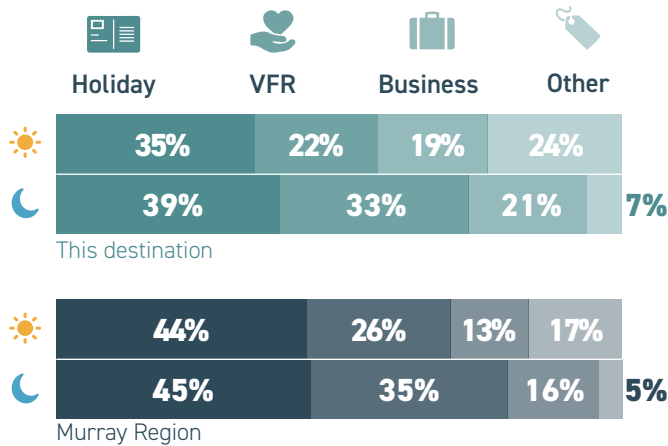
Based on Tourism Research Australia (TRA) data for Swan Hill Rural City Council.

This destination ■
Murray Region ■

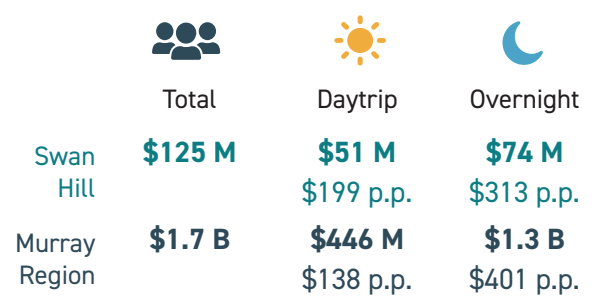


DOMESTIC VISITOR PROFILE

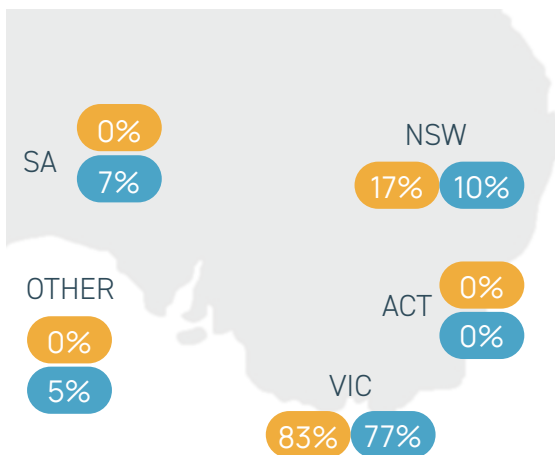
PURPOSE OF VISIT



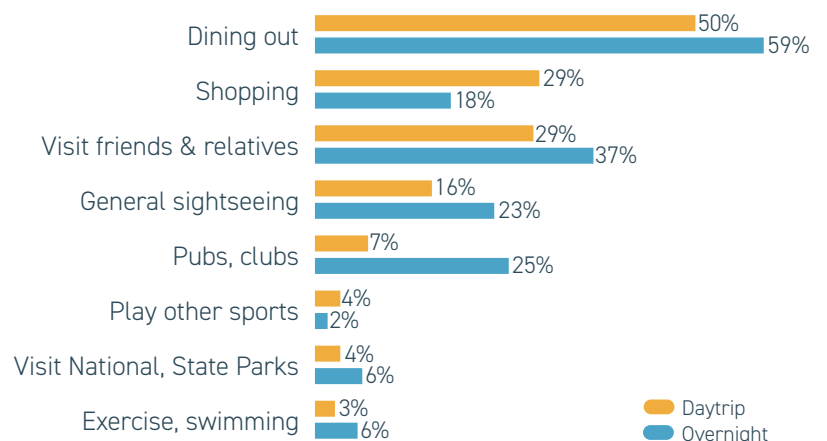
VISITOR SPEND



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 Swan Hill and Reason for Target				
Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak
<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

Swan Hill has relatively high awareness among the Australian population (36% of the population have heard of Swan Hill and have interest in visiting), partially due to the isolated location of this destination.

Additionally, Swan Hill has undertaken destination marketing over the years which has contributed largely to the high levels of awareness for this destination. Key to this is Swan Hill leading its marketing activities with the destination name and persistently pushing a consistent message and brand.

Having established relatively high awareness across the Australian market, Swan Hill has potential to grow the visitor economy with the development of new and contemporary products and experiences.

There is very low awareness of Lake Boga (17%), which is a potential hero asset for this destination. Product and experience development and promotion will help to activate these natural assets and increase their awareness.

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.

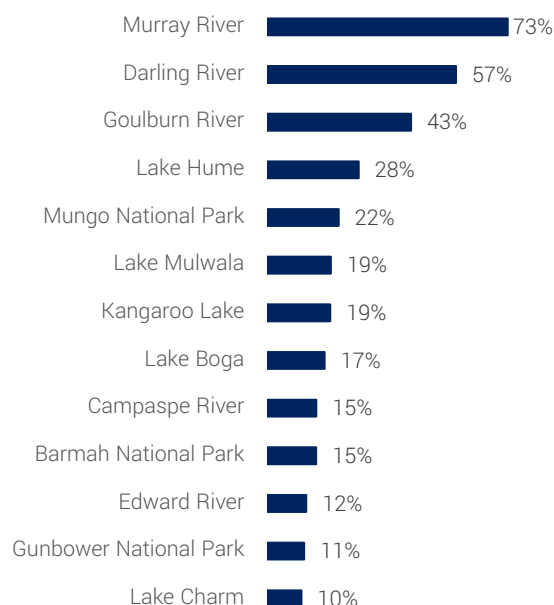
Destinations must develop hero products and experiences to differentiate themselves from the rest of the Murray region, which reinforces the potential role of Lake Boga as a hero experience for Swan Hill.

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%
Holbrook	23%	49%
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.

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?

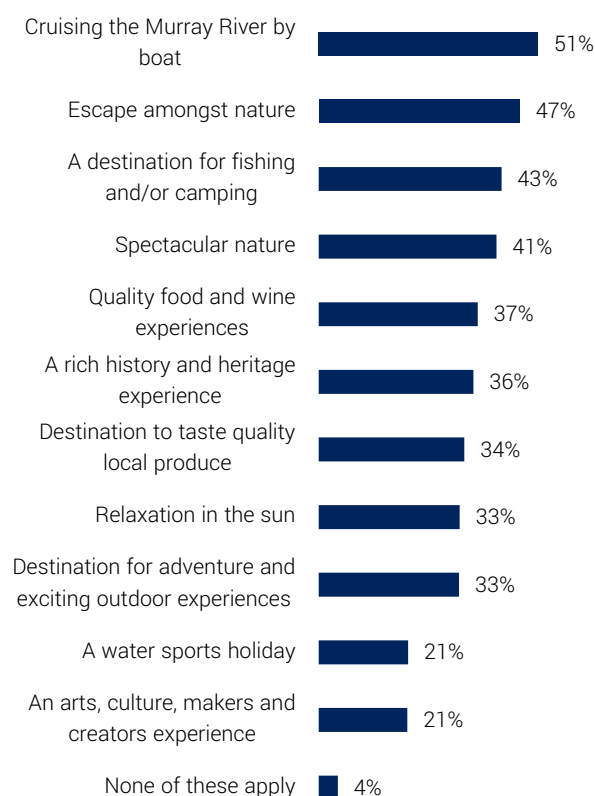
Nature-based attractions and experiences are at the core of what the Australian market perceives to be the "Murray experience".

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%).

Nature based experiences are considered a primary strength of Swan Hill. There is opportunity for further investment and development of nature based experiences and cruising to meet the expectations of the contemporary Australian market.

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

The Swan Hill region is a well-developed visitor destination that has strong foundations in regard to infrastructure, nature-based assets and heritage attractions, however, requires more diversity in product and experience to grow the visitor market

Product strengths of this destination include:

- Nature-based tourism and waterway recreation experiences including the Murray River and Lake Boga, as well as River Red Gum Parks.
- Unique location along the most unregulated and natural part of the river, which is highly suited to paddle sports.
- Post settlement history and heritage, including Pioneer Settlement and paddle steamers.
- Rich indigenous history and emerging strengths in Aboriginal tourism.
- Experiencing art through the Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery.
- Emerging strengths in golf experiences, including Murray Downs Golf and Country Club.

Swan Hill Unique Selling Proposition (USP) within the Murray Region

It is difficult to pinpoint a unique selling proposition for Swan Hill in the context of the Murray. The one aspect that is somewhat unique is the unregulated natural waterway, which makes it popular for fishing and paddle sports.



How to build on the destination USP?

As identified above the lack of unique product development in Swan Hill impacts on the ability for a clear and distinct USP. Murray Downs and Pioneer Settlement are the two key products that are motivational drivers of visitation in addition to the Murray River.

Further development of products and experiences in Swan Hill needs to be the focus. In particular, those that leverage the competitive strengths and emerging opportunities for Swan Hill, such as nature based tourism, arts, agritourism, indigenous tourism and recreation.

Opportunities include:

- **Development of new, high quality accommodation experiences.**
- **Indigenous cultural experiences.**
- **Contemporary boutique food and wine experiences.**
- **Facilitate development of more grass roots artisan and cultural development experiences that add richness to the experience.**
- **Investment in beautifying the town centre.**

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.

Swan Hill Rural City Council has the foundations of a strong and sustainable destination. Being a visitor destination governed by a single Council is an advantage as it allows Council to develop a clear approach to tourism development and marketing.

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.
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.

Organisation	Overview	Activities
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 • Product development. • Industry training. • Industry support and engagement. • Investment attraction and facilitation.
Local Government <i>Swan Hill Rural City Council</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"> • Visitor services. • Destination marketing. • Investment attraction/facilitation. • Industry training. • Product development.
Swan Hill Incorporated	Swan Hill Incorporated is a representative body responsible for marketing and promoting Swan Hill as a place to visit, shop and enjoy. The membership-based organisation aims to increase visitation to and spend in Swan Hill, advocate on behalf of businesses and provide support and directions to encourage quality service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy. • Destination marketing. • In-region gift-card. • Industry networking and support. • Industry training and professional development. • Promotion and marketing.

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

- Existing product offering is well suited to older demographics, nature-based visitors and multi-generational family travel.
- Visitation is highly seasonal, revolving around key holiday and summer periods.
- Need for investment in product and experience to attract the younger millennial and higher spend markets.
- Key drivers of current visitation are Swan Hill's river location, history and heritage and golf courses.
- Opportunity to engage habitual travellers in new products and experiences to expand yield.

Product, Experience and Events

- Lack of progressive, contemporary and inspiring product and experience.
- Need for retail and dining businesses to expand opening hours to better meet the expectations of visitors.
- Capitalise on the region's strengths in primary produce to deliver experiential dining and farm based experiences.
- Increase indigenous nature-based tourism through storytelling, guided tours and experiences co-designed with the Aboriginal community.
- Need for investment and maintenance into park infrastructure with Redgum Parks, led by Parks Victoria.
- Need to increase provision of family friendly product and experience to meet the needs and expectations of the family market.
- Leverage Swan Hill's existing rail infrastructure to deliver unique rail experiences.
- Expand the region's arts and cultural offering to enrich the experience of visitors.
- Lack of retail suited to visitors.
- Opportunity to create a suite of coordinated events to showcase the region and attract new visitors.

Accommodation

- Overall lack of accommodation supply.
 - Need for more formalised camping opportunities along the Murray River, particularly in the Redgum Parks.
 - Lacking supply of quality midscale self-contained accommodation to service business and holiday/leisure visitors.
 - Need for reinvestment in outdated motel accommodation stock.
 - Opportunity to deliver high quality riverfront accommodation that can attract high-end luxury markets.
 - Opportunity to provide pet-friendly accommodation.
-

Infrastructure and Planning

- Expand and improve shared trails and connections between the river and town centre.
- Deliver infrastructure to enhance nature-based attributes and promote engagement with the region's nature-based assets.
- Improve water-access and infrastructure such as wharves, boat ramps and moorings to meet the needs of visitors engaging in fishing, water sports and other water-based activities.
- Need for port or wharfing infrastructure between Swan Hill and Robinvale to encourage commercial boating.
- Opportunity to develop high quality sporting infrastructure and facilities to attract sporting events.
- Need for streetscape improvements and placemaking in Swan Hill.
- Improve public transport between Swan Hill and Melbourne.
- Investment in formalised amenity for caravan and camping visitors.
- Poor road infrastructure throughout the region.

Brand, Marketing and Visitor Servicing

- Clear brand, however a lack of destination identity.
- Outdated and sparse visitor signage and wayfinding points.
- Opportunity to elevate market awareness of the region and its visitor market offering.
- Improve online visitor servicing.
- Need to educate local operators to become ambassadors for the destination.
- Expand the number of bookable products and experiences available in the region.
- Explore the opportunity to develop packages that include a combination of experiences, products and/or accommodation to attract new visitors.
- Increase digital presence of operators and utilisation of digital marketing.

Industry Development and Workforce

- Labour shortages, including skilled and unskilled workers, exacerbated by lack of international migration.
 - Lack of affordable accommodation to support attraction and retention of workforce.
 - Improve engagement between the Indigenous community and tourism industry.
 - Collaboration and communication between operators is required to promote and elevate the destination.
 - Need to connect job seekers with education and training opportunities aligned to workforce needs.
 - Poor perception of hospitality and tourism as a career is a barrier to workforce attraction.
-

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
 - Public Transport Victoria
 - VicRoads
 - Parks Victoria (Parks Vic)
- Local Government agencies, including:
 - Swan Hill Rural City Council (Council)
 - Swan Hill Incorporated (Swan Hill Inc)
- First Nations Group
- Industry

4.1. PRODUCT, EXPERIENCE AND EVENTS

T5. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p>Chisholm Reserve Motorsport Complex Deliver upon the Chisolm Reserve masterplan to ensure the growth and success of the motor sports industry.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver infrastructure priorities. - Continue to attract major motor sports events. 	<p>Council Industry</p>	Ongoing
<p>Cruising Experience Investment Refer to the Murray Cruising Strategy for key project opportunities. Specific need include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water equipment hire locations - Paddle sports hubs - Fishing tours 	<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 Council MRT DRM</p>	Short term
<p>Development of the Mallee Almond Blossom Festival Increase the festival offering in the region by developing the Mallee Almond Blossom Festival.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a strategic action plan for enhancement of the Mallee Almond Blossom Festival. 	<p>Industry Council MRT DRM</p>	Short term
<p>First Nations Experience Building on the rich Aboriginal culture and history strengths of Swan Hill there is opportunity to develop a first nations experience. This may focus on the Murray River and include nature based and cruising opportunity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with First Nations peoples to establish a year round cultural experience. 	<p>First Nations Group Council</p>	Short term
<p>Riverside Splash Park Develop a state of the art interactive splash park targeted towards children 5yrs+ in Swan Hill's Riverside Park which runs alongside the Murray River. The splash park creative look would be designed by a local Aboriginal Artist and could tell the story of Pondi (a Murray Cod Aboriginal story), linking into Swan Hill's Giant Murray Cod statue and Heartbeat of the Murray Laser light show story.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan and design splash park. - Seek funding and implement. 	<p>Council</p>	Short term
<p>Signature Events Calendar Swan Hill should review their events calendar with a focus on supporting new signature events including arts and culture, sport, music and family-friendly events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the events calendar and seek to provide funding to support new signature events that strengthen the Swan Hill brand. 	<p>Council Industry</p>	Short term

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
Waterfront Activation Precinct			
Develop an enclosed swimming pool on the Little Murray River and provide commercial activation through investment in shipping containers to support food and beverage operations.	- Undertake a concept plan, feasibility and location study for the precinct.	Council Industry	Short term
“On Farm” Experiences			
Promote local produce by supporting development of farm open days, on-farm experiences and farm gates, and paddock to plate dining experiences.	- MRT to share agri-tourism research and recommendations with industry through further engagement with the sector.	Local producers	Medium term
Lake Boga Active Trail			
The proposed Lake Boga Trail consists of a 16km trail between Swan Hill and Lake Boga and includes the construction of 12.6km sealed trail that will run alongside the Murray Valley Highway and VicTrack Rail Reserve connecting the townships.	- Seek funding and commence construction.	Council	Medium term
Pental Island Aboriginal Tourism Experience			
Pental Island is a small island separated by the Little Murray River from Swan Hill’s Pioneer Settlement by a pedestrian bridge. There is extensive potential to develop the island as a community led Aboriginal tourism experience incorporating an education space and yarning space. This project would support Aboriginal employment and empowerment and offer a new Aboriginal tourism experience for visitors. It would also enhance the overall offering of Pioneer Settlement, Swan Hill’s number one attraction.	- Repair pedestrian bridge. - Continue planning and designing experiences. - Work with traditional owner groups to develop experiences. - Seek funding and implement.	Council First Nations Group	Medium term
Family Friendly Attractions			
There is a need for product development to service the family market. This will help to strengthen the family visitor market to the region.	- Promote the attraction of a family orientated visitor experience.	Council Industry	Long term
Accommodation Investment			
Refer to the Murray Region Accommodation Study for project details to attract investment in the identified priority projects: - Serviced apartment/hotel, Swan Hill Riverfront - Eco accommodation, Pental Island - Resort Accommodation, Murray Downs - Waterfront accommodation development, Lake Boga - Motel upgrades	- 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.	Industry Council	Ongoing

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<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 stages 2 and 3 of the trail.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop trail design for the Swan Hill-Nyah Section. - Continue to advocate for funding. 	<p>Council Parks Vic</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Link to Lake Tyrrell</p> <p>There is opportunity to create a touring loop that connects Swan Hill to Lake Tyrrell and Sea Lake, to leverage the growing international touring market. This experience will incorporate silo art and could include aboriginal cultural experiences led by Traditional Owners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop touring route and engage with operators that could provide experiences. - Work in partnership with Buloke Shire and Visit Victoria to deliver promotions and marketing campaigns. 	<p>Council Industry Swan Hill Inc Visit Victoria</p>	<p>Short-medium term</p>

4.2. INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING

T6. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p>Amenity to Service Campers</p> <p>Investment in formalised amenity to service caravan and camping visitors, including toilets, picnic tables and BBQs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a plan to identify gaps in amenity for the caravan market. 	Council	Short term
<p>Sporting Infrastructure</p> <p>There is a need to improve infrastructure at major events precincts including toilet upgrades, power upgrades and lighting upgrades.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a plan for infrastructure upgrades at event facilities. - Advocate for investment. 	Council	Short term
<p>Swan Hill Streetscape</p> <p>Swan Hill's streetscape requires improvement to realise the town's potential as a visitor and lifestyle destination, and to meet the needs and expectations of visitors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop concept plans aiming to improve the Swan Hill town centre and facilitate connections between the Murray River, civic buildings and key visitors attractions. - Develop modern streetscape and landscaping consistent with the local brand. 	Council	Short term
<p>Access and Transport Advocacy</p> <p>The public transport linkages and road infrastructure for access to Swan Hill are poor. This impacts on the ability for workers and visitors to access the town.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake population and visitation modelling to provide a case for public transport links and road upgrades. 	PTV VicRoads Council	Medium term
<p>Infrastructure Servicing</p> <p>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. 	Servicing authorities Council	Medium term
<p>Water Access Infrastructure</p> <p>Improve access to the Murray River at Swan Hill. Opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of a public wharf at Swan Hill with mooring points. - Investment in standardised water access points. - Weir at Swan Hill. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a study which audits and identifies required moorings, jetties, fishing platforms and marinas across the Murray River and Lake Boga. - This should include identification and design and consider private and public sector cruising opportunities. 	Council GMW MDBA	Medium term

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p>Advocacy to Address Housing Crisis Continued advocacy to State and Federal Government to address housing crisis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MRT and Councils to work with regional stakeholders to quantify housing needs and delivery of programs to meet required demand. 	<p>MRT DRM RDV Council</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 Swan Hill. 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>Council</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Marketing Plan</p> <p>Prepare a Swan Hill Marketing Plan with consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targeting social media to certain demographics. - Influencers to the region and knowing target markets. - Podcasts like story towns and using this as a platform to showcase the region. - Digital advertising - not visible in region. - Opportunities to leverage MRT cooperative marketing activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver a marketing plan with consideration of digital marketing. 	<p>Swan Hill Inc</p> <p>Council</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Visitor Information Review and Delivery</p> <p>Undertake a visitor information and signage review across the destination, and prepare a strategy to deliver the following needs as one destination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signage (wayfinding and tourism). - Gateway enhancements and interventions. - Visitor information touchpoints throughout the visitor journey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a visitor information services review. 	<p>Swan Hill Inc</p> <p>Council</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.</p> <p>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>Council</p> <p>Industry</p> <p>Swan Hill Inc</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

4.4. INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE

T8. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p>Regional Workforce Pathways and Promotion Program</p> <p>MRT to develop and implement a framework that promotes the attractiveness of the tourism industry and attracts new workforce. The program should be twofold:</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. - 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MRT to develop a regional workforce skills gap analysis and campaigns. - MRT to work with local Councils and other stakeholders (jobs boards, LLENs etc) to promote opportunities. 	<p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Secondary schools</p> <p>Higher education</p> <p>Employment networks</p>	<p>Short term and Ongoing</p>
<p>Skills Development Plan</p> <p>Using the outcomes of the regional workforce gap analysis and feedback from industry, collaborate with TAFE's, LLEN's and higher education providers to deliver tailored and location-based industry training solutions.</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake workshop with industry to identify specific skill and training needs. - Work with higher education providers to develop courses and course material. 	<p>Council</p> <p>Industry</p> <p>Swan Hill Inc</p> <p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> <p>Higher Education</p> <p>TAFEs</p>	<p>Short term and Ongoing</p>	
<p>Digital Literacy for Operators</p> <p>Improve the capability of operators to utilise online visitor services, such as online booking services, social media and motivational websites.</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver a digital literacy program for industry. 	<p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Swan Hill Inc</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>Weekend Trading</p> <p>There is a need to address the very limited trading hours of businesses within the region, including restaurants, cafes and retail stores. This includes extending businesses hours when major events are occurring in the region.</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with retail and hospitality businesses to encourage longer weekend trading hours during events, as a first step in extending trading hours. 	<p>Swan Hill Inc</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Industry</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	

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

Swan Hill Rural City Council

- Swan Hill Destination Marketing Strategy, 2021
- Swan Hill Community Vision and Council Plan, 2021-2025
- Swan Hill Rural City Council Investment Prospectus Snapshot, Swan Hill Rural City Council, 2020
- Economic Development Insights Report, Swan Hill Rural City Council, 2021
- Victorian Visitor Economy Master Plan Priority and Project Development: Pental Island, Swan Hill – Lake Boga Path and Riverside Splash Park
- Swan Hill Chisolm Reserve Complex Development Masterplan, 2016

