

FEBRUARY 2023

YARRAWONGA-MULWALA 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 (2023-2027) (available for download [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 Yarrawonga-Mulwala. This includes the destinations in proximity, as described in Section 1.

ANNUAL VISITOR ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

1.1M

Visitors

\$261M

Spend

UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION WITHIN THE MURRAY REGION

Lake Mulwala is the hero experience and unique selling proposition for the destination. In particular, the amenity of the lake as a backdrop for the visitor experience, and consistency of water levels for on water activation, is unique across the region. Lake Mulwala provides an anchoring point for the destination and can act as a strong visual landmark.



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"> Waterfront Food, Drink and Entertainment Activation Night-time Economy Activation Plan On-Water Activations Attract Family Activities and Attractions Cruising Experience Investment Lake Mulwala Aboriginal Cultural Centre Water Theme Park "On Farm" Experiences Conference Centre Murray Winter Night Time Events Accommodation Investment Murray River Adventure Trail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lake Mulwala Waterfront Masterplan New Bridge Accessing Lake Mulwala Access and Transport Advocacy Yarrowonga Airport Upgrade Infrastructure Servicing Urban Design Framework Advocacy to Address Housing Crisis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bookable Product and Packaging Brand Review Cross-Border Marketing Plan 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. YARRAWONGA-MULWALA LOCAL AREA PLAN

1.1. THIS PROJECT

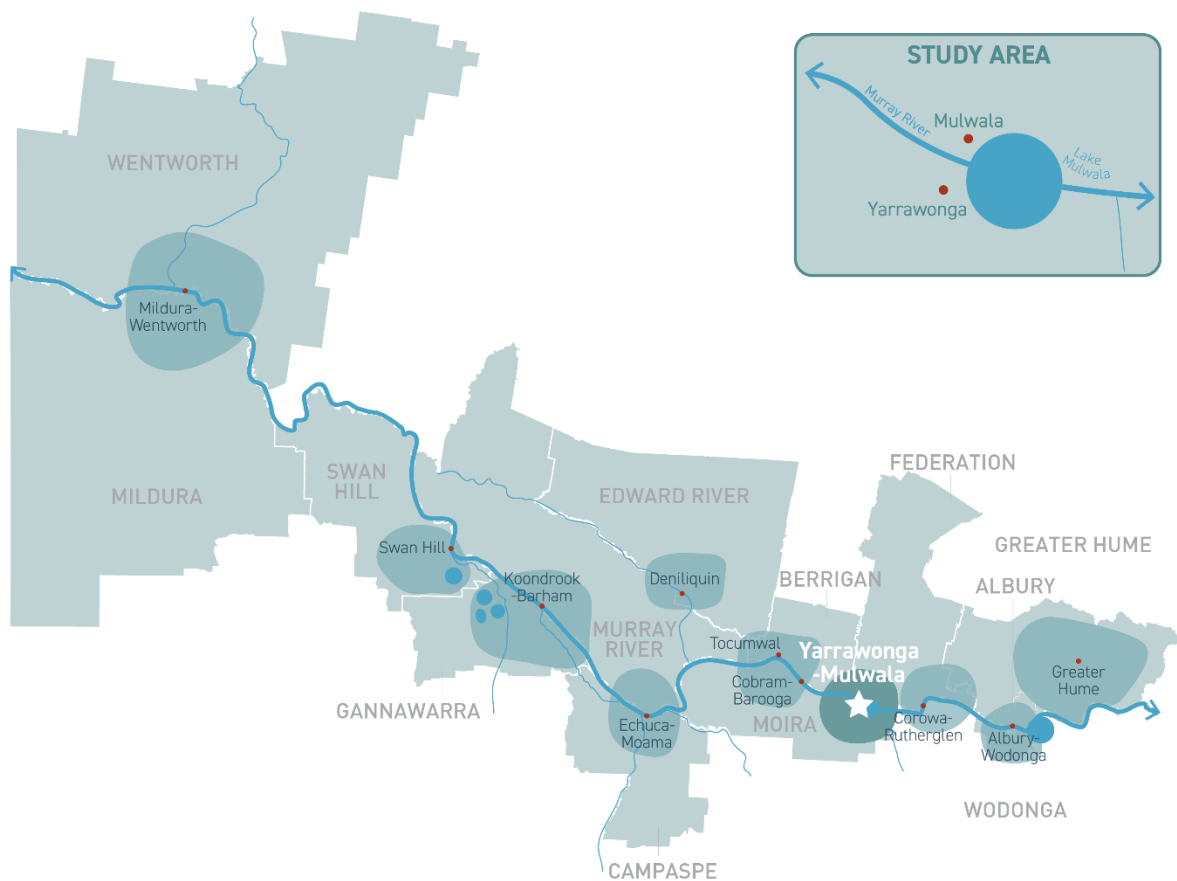
Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) and Destination Riverina Murray (DRM) have prepared Local Area Plans (Plan) for 10 of the Murray region’s prominent destinations, as shown in the map below.

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 Yarrowonga-Mulwala. 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 22 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 Yarrawonga-Mulwala 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 Moira Shire and Federation Local Government Areas, due to sampling constraints that prevent further fine-grain analysis.

OVERVIEW

This destination attracts 1.1 million visitors, making up 17% of visitation to the Murray region. Visitors generate \$261 million in visitor expenditure, majority of which is generated in Moira Shire.

Daytrip visitors to this destination make up the greatest proportion of overall visitation (53%), however contribute the least to overall expenditure in the region (20%).

There is potential to grow expenditure of daytrip visitors through the development of bookable products and experiences, visitor accommodation cruising, cultural heritage and nature-based tourism in the region. Currently, daytrip visitors spend well below the average visitor spend for the Murray region (\$75 per visitor to Federation, \$101 per visitor to Moira Shire as compared to \$138 for the Murray region).

This destination attracts 514,000 overnight visitors who generate \$208 million in visitor spend. Development of accommodation that meets the expectations of the visitor market will allow for greater visitation to the region and contribute positively to the yield of overnight visitors.

DOMESTIC VISITOR PROFILE

A high proportion of visitors to this destination are holiday and leisure travellers. Yarrawonga-Mulwala owes its strong holiday and leisure market to Lake Mulwala, a hero asset within this destination

The VFR market is strong across both overnight and daytrip visitor markets, highlighting the opportunity to educate locals to ensure they are accurately and adequately promoting the region and its assets to their visiting friends and relatives (VFR).

Majority of visitors to this destination originate from Victoria: 75% of both daytrip and overnight visitors. Outside of Victoria, NSW visitors make up a considerable proportion of interstate visitation.

Dining at restaurants and cafes is the primary activity undertaken by daytrip (46%) and overnight (57%) visitors. Passive activities, including VFR, general sightseeing and swimming, are a key activity undertaken by visitors which may contribute to lower average visitor spend.

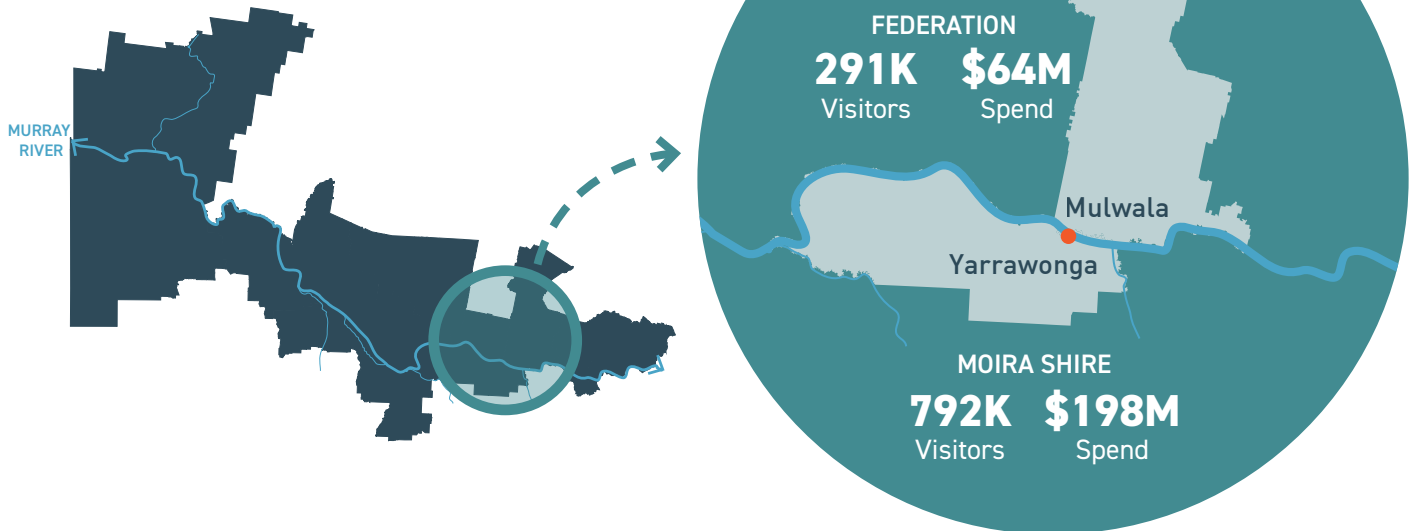
¹ Source: TRA. Visitor numbers, TRA, 2019, based on 2017-19 3 year average. Average spend per visitor, TRA LGA Profile, 2019, based on 2016-19 4 year average. Total spend, calculated by Urban Enterprise, average spend applied to visitor numbers.

VISITOR ECONOMY OVERVIEW

YARRAWONGA-MULWALA

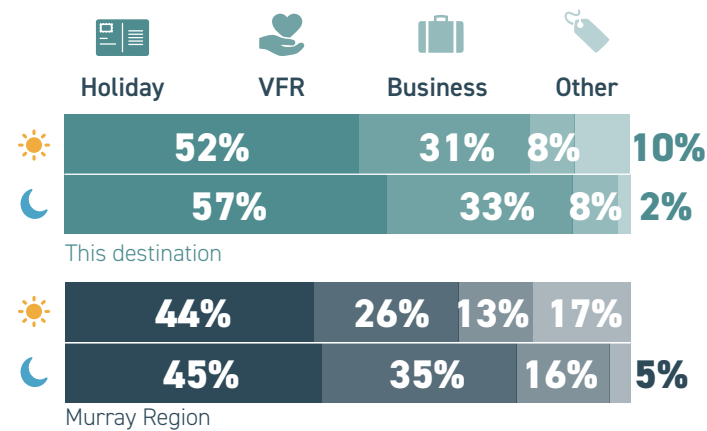
Based on Tourism Research Australia (TRA) data for Federation and Moira Shire, which form this destination.

This destination ■
Murray Region ■

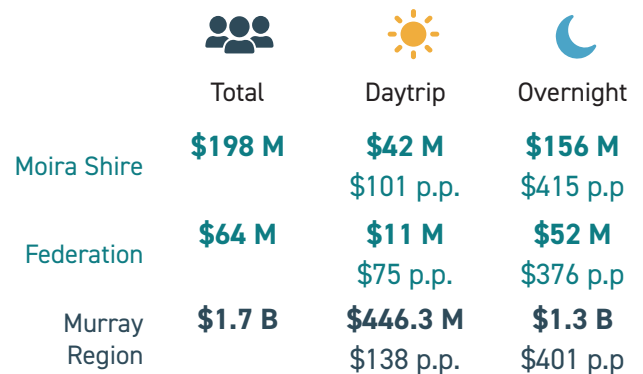


DOMESTIC VISITOR PROFILE

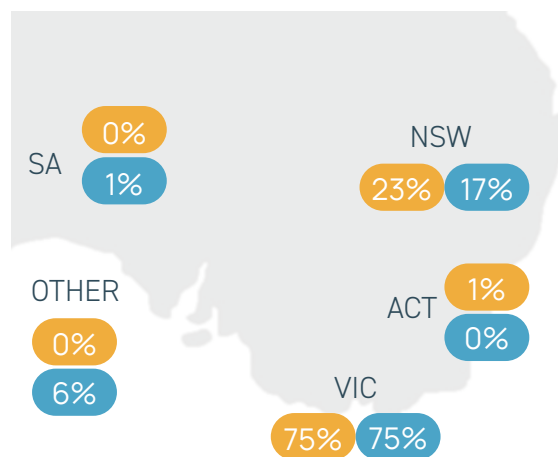
PURPOSE OF VISIT



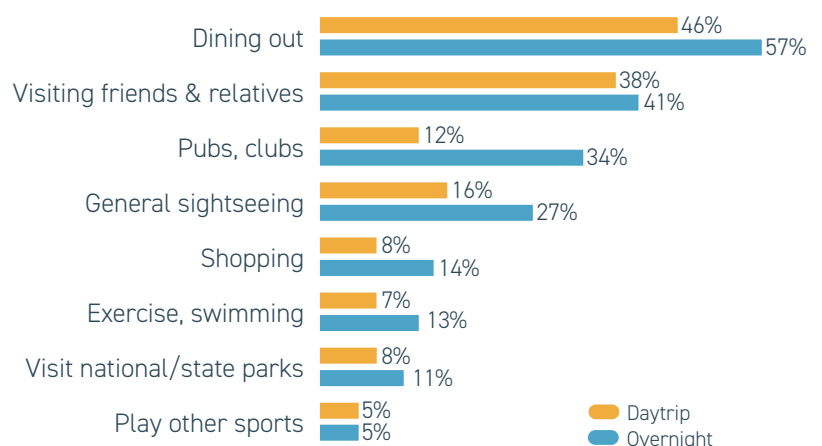
VISITOR SPEND



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 market's 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 Yarrawonga-Mulwala and Reason for Target				
Strong	Moderate	Moderate	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

Yarrawonga-Mulwala has low awareness within the Australian population, with 47% of Australian's having never heard of the destination, despite attracting high levels of annual visitation.

By comparison, the majority of the Australian market have the greatest awareness of Mildura and Swan Hill. This demonstrates there is potential to grow the awareness of Yarrawonga-Mulwala through coordinated marketing activities and delivery of a clear and cohesive brand.

Only a small portion of the Australian market have heard of the destination and have interest in visiting (23%). The remainder either have visited in the past or have heard of the destination and are not interested in visiting.

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%

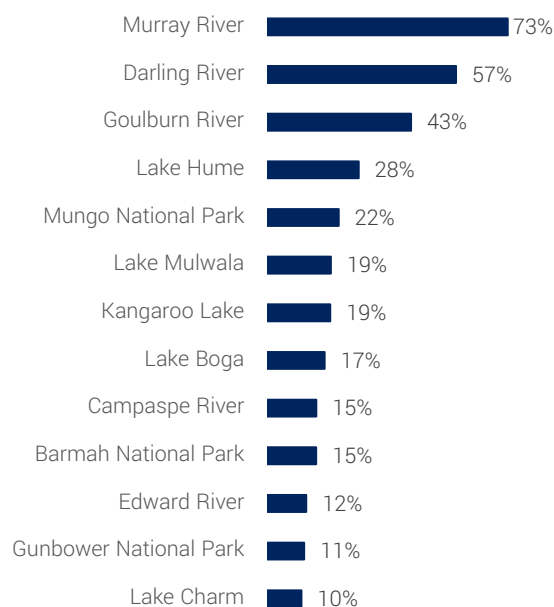
Source: Murray Region Market Research by Urban Enterprise, 2022.

There is very low awareness of Lake Mulwala (19%) amongst the Australian market, a hero attraction within this destination. Product and experience development and promotion will help to activate this natural asset and increase 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 of Lake Mulwala.

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.

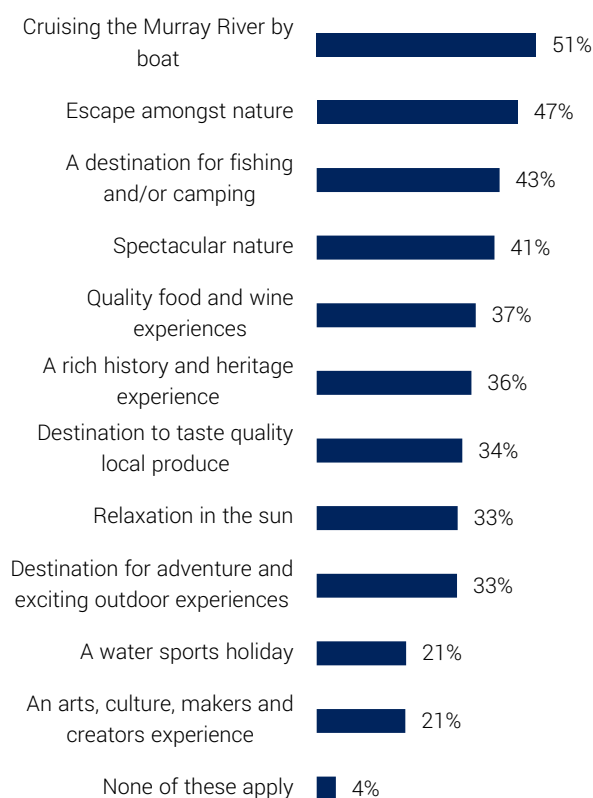
What is the Murray Known for?

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%).

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

Yarrawonga-Mulwala is a well-developed visitor destination that has strengths in water based activities, nature based experiences, recreation clubs and golf. The destination is beginning to attract a growing high yield visitor market, with development of the Sebel Silverwoods and other boutique food and farmgate experiences.

For Yarrawonga-Mulwala, there are a range of product strengths and hero experiences. These include:

- Lake Mulwala and security of water and development around the Lakes.
- A diversity of high quality golf experiences and picturesque lakeside/riverside backdrop of golf clubs.
- Strategic location for visitors to explore the region's food, wineries, and farmgate experiences.
- Hidden river beaches.
- Water skiing, boating and jet skiing on Lake Mulwala.
- Safe water sports destination for families due to the calm and stable lake conditions.
- Rich Aboriginal culture and heritage within the destination.

Yarrawonga-Mulwala Unique Selling Proposition (USP) within the Murray Region

Lake Mulwala is the hero experience and unique selling proposition for the destination. In particular, the amenity of the lake as a backdrop for the visitor experience, and consistency of water levels for on water activation, is unique across the region.



Lake Mulwala provides an anchoring point for the destination and can act as a strong visual landmark.

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 with the Lake backdrop. This can include:

- Dining experiences on the waterfront.
- Cultural product and events utilising and activating the Lake.
- Art, sculptural and lighting interventions on water and around the Lake.
- Continued investment in contemporary cruising and water activation experiences.
- Development of waterfront accommodation.

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 Councils and lack of coordinated and cohesive destination marketing. 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.

Organisation	Overview	Activities
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.
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 support and engagement. • Industry training. • Product development. • Investment attraction and facilitation.
Local Government <i>Moira Shire and Federation 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"> • Visitor services. • Destination marketing. • Investment attraction/facilitation. • Industry training. • Product development.
Yarrawonga Mulwala Tourism & Business	Yarrawonga Mulwala Tourism and Business is a not-for-profit, membership based association geared towards developing and maintaining a strong tourism industry in the Yarrawonga-Mulwala region. The association supports the operation of multiple community and tourism based events throughout the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor services. • Events and festivals. • Destination marketing.
Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Education (ACHE)	ACHE is an organisation owned and operated by traditional owners, the Bangerang People. The organisation offers a range of services, including welcome to country's, smoking ceremony's, guest speaking, cultural talks and workshops, awareness training and dance groups, in order to preserve, protect and share knowledge and land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting people to country, culture and community. • Product development. • Workshops and training.

Organisation	Overview	Activities
Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation (YYNAC)	<p>Established to represent, make decisions and act on any matters of significance to the Yorta Yorta peoples, and to enter into agreements with any person, Government agency or authority in relation to the protections of Yorta Yorta Country.</p> <p>Yorta Yorta Country is large area spanning a large part of northern Victoria and southern New South Wales, centred around the Murray River.</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

- Strong habitual visitor market, with high holiday home ownership and repeat visitation.
- Product mix well suited to a broad demographic.
- A need for products and experiences to attract the younger millennial market and higher value consumers.
- Difficulty attracting visitors during winter period and outside of peak holiday periods.
- 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.
- Lack of product and experience to attract higher value consumers and millennials.

Product, Experience and Events

- Conferencing is a major opportunity however there is a need for larger scale conferencing facilities. There are also many alternative destinations between Yarrowonga-Mulwala and Melbourne/Sydney for large-scale conferences.
- Need for facilities to host business, education and sporting market midweek, including conferencing centre.
- Food quality and price point is often too low – there is a need to lift the quality of the experience to meet expectations of newer high yield visitor markets.
- Need to activate the night time economy.
- Events struggling to reinvigorate after COVID, this is due to lower levels of volunteerism.
- High demand for bookable experiences, however very few available.
- Deliver products and experiences for the education market.
- Market expectation to be able to have a nature-based experience that isn't currently available.
- Lack of touchpoints to experience the First Nations cultural heritage – significant opportunity to lift the cultural tourism offerings and showcase local culture through tours and a contemporary cultural centre. This could utilise the Lake.
- Untapped First Nations stories and experiences.
- Need to harness the growing strength of the food and produce industry. Opportunity to grow presence in the Murray Farmgate Trail.
- Connect accommodation providers with products and experiences, such as golf clubs, through e-bikes, scooters, golf buggies and mobility scooters.
- A lack of food culture and high-quality dining establishments makes it difficult to attract chefs and restaurateurs to the region.
- Comparative advantage that there is easy access to culturally significant sites and bush setting.
- Strength in family focused attractions – need for products and experiences that aren't weather-dependant.
- Golf accessibility is a major strength and diversity in the golf offering.
- Development of an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Centre located on the banks of Lake Mulwala.
- Develop bookable, packaged products and experiences to drive visitor yield, such as a day trip including fishing charter, picnic lunch and overnight accommodation.

Accommodation

- Need to match quality accommodation and dining with quality of nature-based experiences.
 - Packaging together accommodation with experiences.
 - Need for additional accommodation that is high quality and meets contemporary visitor expectations.
-

Infrastructure and Planning

- Develop unique transport options, including water taxis, helicopters and light aircraft transport.
- Lake Mulwala is a potential hero experience but is poorly activated and there is limited locations for boat mooring at the town centres.
- Strong holiday home base which has driven significant growth in the destination, however there is some sentiment that this has made Yarrawonga like a suburb of Melbourne with overdevelopment.
- Need to balance development outcomes in the interests of both visitors and community.
- Lack of infrastructure for commercial boat operators, including water, electricity and mooring options.
- Need to activate the river and lake frontage, including increasing accessibility to the waterways through boat ramps, public pontoons and public temporary mooring points, as well as through private sector activations.
- Poor connectivity between walking and cycling paths.
- Lack of infrastructure for growing caravanning market, including parking and dump points.
- Need for an upgrade to the Murray Valley Highway to provide slip lanes to access visitor economy businesses.
- Need to delivery new bridge across Lake Mulwala to support growth.
- Opportunity to promote further use of the Albury Airport as a way to access Yarrawonga-Mulwala.

Brand, Marketing and Visitor Servicing

- Unable to meet demands of high visitation on weekends leading to poor quality visitor experience.
- Outdated and sparse visitor signage and wayfinding points.
- Unclear brand/identity for the destination, and confusion of brands (e.g. Yarrawonga-Mulwala, Sun Country on the Murray and North of the Murray).
- Significant investment has been made into the Sun Country and North of the Murray brands – there is a need to explore how to strengthen the Yarrawonga-Mulwala brand and increase awareness, and how they relate to existing brands.
- Unclear roles and responsibilities for tourism development and marketing.
- Increase digital presence of businesses is needed.
- Increase local knowledge of the destination to help to promote and create local advocates.

Industry Development and Workforce

- 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.
 - 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.
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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
 - NSW Crown Lands;
 - Goulburn Murray Water
 - Murray–Darling Basin Authority
 - Parks Victoria (Parks Vic)
 - NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services
 - VicRoads
 - Transport for NSW
 - Public Transport Victoria
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Education (ACHE)
- Local Government agencies, including:
 - Moira Shire Council (Moira SC)
 - Federation Council (Federation C)
- Industry

4.1. PRODUCT, EXPERIENCE AND EVENTS

T5. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p>Waterfront Food, Drink and Entertainment Activation</p> <p>Support attraction of waterfront dining establishments to activate the waterfront and provide contemporary experiences. Opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Floating restaurant - Waterfront dining - Pop-up food and beverage on waterfront 	<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>Councils</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Night-time Economy Activation Plan</p> <p>Yarrowonga-Mulwala lacks a week-round, year-round night time economy. E.g. lighting, busking and live music at venues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with local industry to develop plan and activations. 	<p>Councils</p> <p>Industry</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>On-Water Activations</p> <p>Arts and cultural interventions to activate Lake Mulwala, particularly in the off-peak season, including sculptures in the water, on water light projections, particularly in off peak.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek funding for activations. - Work with local and regional artists to develop a program of installations and activations. 	<p>Moira SC</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Attract Family Activities and Attractions</p> <p>There is a need to support the attraction of a diverse, non-water based product offering. In particular, attracting operators to deliver indoor family friendly experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote investment in family friendly activities and experiences. 	<p>Industry</p> <p>Councils</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Cruising Experience Investment</p> <p>Refer to the Murray Cruising Strategy for key project opportunities. Specific need include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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>Councils</p> <p>GMW</p> <p>Industry</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Lake Mulwala Aboriginal Cultural Centre</p> <p>Work with Traditional Owners to deliver a cultural centre at Yarrowonga Mulwala (Brambuk Precedent). This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visitor Information - Booking Hub for tours, products and experiences - Marina 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council, in conjunction with Traditional Owners, to undertake a concept plan, feasibility and location study for the centre, including management and operational model. 	<p>ACHE</p> <p>Moira SC</p>	<p>Medium term</p>

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p>Water Theme Park Development of a theme park that can attract year-round visitation to the destination.</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>Moirra SC Industry</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p>“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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MRT to share agri-tourism research and recommendations with industry through further engagement with the sector. - Continue to develop and support the local farmgate trail and develop it into a saleable tourism product. 	<p>Local producers MRT DRM</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p>Conference Centre Conferencing facilities to attract the business and conference market supported by large high quality visitor accommodation. Consider co-location with cultural centre opportunity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council to support investment by investigating potential site opportunities and promotion of opportunity to investors. 	<p>Industry Councils</p>	<p>Medium to long term</p>
<p>Murray Winter Night Time Events 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 Councils in collaboration with MRT and industry.</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 DRM Industry Councils</p>	<p>Long term</p>
<p>Accommodation Investment 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"> - Lake Mulwala Resort - Sebel Stage 2, Yarrawonga - Redevelopment of Yarrawonga-Mulwala Motels into Hotel/Resort - Experiential 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 Councils</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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>	<p>- Work with MRT and relevant stakeholders to develop stage one of the Murray River Adventure Trail.</p>	<p>MRT DRM Parks Vic NPWS Councils</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

4.2. INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING

T6. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
Lake Mulwala Waterfront Masterplan Development of a cross-border masterplan that considers Lake Mulwala as one destination.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Streetscaping and landscaping. - Consistent signage and sculptural interventions. - Around the Lake Cycling Trail (Development of a boardwalk around the perimeter of Lake Mulwala for walking / cycling). - Integration with the Mulwala Foreshore Masterplan as required. - Equipment hire at waterfront/in town (e.g. E-bikes, water equipment etc). - Private sector waterfront dining opportunities (e.g. pop up cafes, picnic hamper businesses, waterfront restaurant etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Councils to engage a consultant to prepare the masterplan. - Promote opportunities to private operators to activate the waterfront. 	Councils GMW	Medium term
New Bridge Advocate for delivery of agreed Green Route bridge alignment.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to advocate into State Governments for delivery of bridge. 	Councils VicRoads	Short term
Accessing Lake Mulwala Develop Lake Mulwala into a hero water destination by supporting the development of cruising and water-based activation through:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water equipment hire. - Water taxi's. - Marina. - All abilities canoe launcher. - Moorings and safe boat parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake an audit of existing access points to Lake Mulwala and identify need for increased water access and mooring capacity. 	Councils GMW	Short term
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. This should include an upgrade to the Murray Valley Highway to provide slip lanes to access visitor economy businesses.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake population and visitation modelling to provide a strong case for upgrades. 	PTV VicRoads Transport for NSW Councils	Medium term

Recommended Actions	Suggested Next Steps	Key Partners	Priority
<p>Yarrowonga Airport Upgrade Increase access to Yarrowonga-Mulwala through upgrades at Yarrowonga Airport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue upgrades to Yarrowonga Airport to increase safety and capacity. 	<p>Industry Councils</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p>Infrastructure Servicing Services infrastructure to allow new development and business investment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with servicing authorities to deliver required infrastructure. 	<p>Servicing authorities Councils</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p>Urban Design Framework There is a need to deliver growth in the towns which contributes to the amenity of the towns, rather than detracts and also reinforces the Yarrowonga-Mulwala as a visitor destination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop an Urban Design Framework for Yarrowonga and Mulwala with consideration of improving amenity, establishing design guidelines and improvement to gateway and town centre amenity. 	<p>Councils</p>	<p>Short-term</p>
<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 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 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 by Councils to develop packaging opportunities. - Increase the amount of experiences that are bookable online. 	<p>Industry Councils</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Brand Review Review of the existing brands (Sun Country, North of the Murray etc) and consideration of ways to unify the brand and strengthen awareness of Yarrawonga-Mulwala.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a review of current branding activities to consider opportunities for enhanced awareness. 	<p>Industry Councils</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Cross-Border Marketing Plan 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>Industry Councils</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Visitor Information Review and Delivery Undertake a visitor servicing, 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). - Gateway enhancements and interventions. - Visitor information touchpoints throughout the visitor journey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a visitor information services review. 	<p>Industry Councils</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
<p>Murray Region Local Ambassador Project 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 swapcard 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 DRM Councils Industry</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 review.	Councils Industry	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	
- 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.	Councils	Short term and ongoing
- Development of pathways program to attract and retain staff, including:	- MRT to work with local Councils and other stakeholders (jobs boards, LLENs etc) to promote opportunities.	Secondary schools Higher education	
<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. 		Employment networks	
Skills Development Plan			
Using the outcomes of the regional workforce gap analysis and feedback from industry, YMTB should collaborate with TAFE's, LLEN's and higher education providers to deliver tailored and location-based industry training solutions.	- Undertake workshop with industry 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

Federation Council

- Federation Council Economic Development Strategy 2021-2025
- Delivery Program and Operational Plan Federation Council 2021
- North of the Murray 5 Year Destination Marketing Strategy and Implementation Plan 2020-2024
- Mulwala Foreshore Public Open Space Masterplan 2015

Moira Shire Council

- Moira Shire Tourism Plan 2022-2026
- Moira Shire Visitor Services Strategy 2017-2019
- Yarrawonga Showgrounds and Victoria Park Masterplan 2022
- Moira Shire Economic Development Strategy 2019-2023
- Moira Shire Arts and Culture Strategy 2020-2026

