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Media Release:

Riverina Murray Regional Tourism Awards Launched

Local tourism operators are being encouraged to enter the 2018 Riverina Murray Regional Tourism Awards following the official launch in Deniliquin on Tuesday 20th March 2018.

The Regional Tourism Awards provide tourism organisations and individuals the opportunity to gain an insight into their industry, their business, achieve recognition for their success and promote tourism within their region. Applications for the awards are now open and will close on Friday 25th May 2018.

Richie Robinson, General Manager of Destination Riverina Murray, is keen to encourage as many local operators across the region as possible to enter and says for those feeling unsure or overwhelmed by the process, there are plenty of resources and assistance on hand.

"Destination Riverina Murray and Murray Regional Tourism are available to assist applicants and ensure the process is as straightforward as possible. For example, first-time awards entrants can access a mentoring and support program facilitated by Murray Regional Tourism to assist with Regional and State awards submissions."

Mark Francis, CEO of Murray Regional Tourism, is a strong supporter of the Regional Tourism Awards. "The Riverina Murray Regional Tourism Awards offers entrants a valuable opportunity to review their business, benchmark performance and celebrate their achievements. Murray Regional Tourism is proud to have supported many Regional, State and National award-winning Murray tourism businesses through our support program. Participating in regional tourism awards is great preparation for entering the State Tourism Awards. I would encourage Murray tourism businesses to nominate and contact MRT to discuss the support available to complete your submission." Mark Francis, CEO of Murray Regional Tourism."

David Frazer from the Riverboats Music Festival encourages potential applicants to access the support available.

"We entered the Victorian Tourism Awards for the first time in 2017 and were thrilled to win Gold at the State and National Tourism Awards in the Festivals and Events category. The response to winning this award was quite overwhelming, but prior to this, we found the process of writing our submission enormously beneficial. All too often businesses such as ours are completely focussed on the task at hand, and the award submission process allowed us to pause, take stock and assess our festival from the ground up.

Furthermore, the support and professional guidance we received from Murray Regional Tourism and our fabulous mentor, proved absolutely invaluable and I have no doubt greatly contributed to our success - I could not recommend this program more", said Mr Frazer.

Entrants are made up of tourism businesses, events, marketing organisations, clubs and individuals all aiming for excellence in their industry. Winners of the Regional Tourism Awards gain finalist status upon entering the NSW State Tourism Awards, and if successful, go onto the National Tourism Awards.

German Ugarte from Outback Geo Adventures in Balranald who won silver in 2016, has entered the Tourism Awards multiple times and says the benefits are immense but advises that it is not something you do two days before the deadline.

“You need to take your time and do it well. We saw it as a great opportunity to review the current state of our business, and we found it created new ideas. Obviously, the 2016 win had significant benefits; it generated publicity and attention that we could then leverage, which as a small business we could not otherwise afford. We are in a small community, and so, it’s not just an award for me, it’s a win for everyone”, said Mr Ugarte.

Entry to the Regional Tourism Awards is open to Victorian and NSW businesses in the Riverina Murray region. The annual awards ceremony will be held at the iconic Deni Ute Muster site in Deniliquin on Saturday 21 July 2018.

Submissions close on Friday, 25th May 2018.

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