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MEDIA RELEASE

\$280,000 funding boost for regional tourism operators across the Riverina Murray

The Riverina Murray region is set to benefit with the recent announcement that two local tourism operators have secured tourism funding, with more than a quarter of a million dollars awarded to Kimo Estate and Belisi Equine Park.

Luxury accommodation venue Kimo Estate, based in the Cootamundra-Gundagai region has received \$130,000, with the funding earmarked for a new eco-hut. Accredited riding school Belisi Equine Park in Wagga Wagga has secured \$150,000 to build four new farm stay cottages.

With further funding available, Destination New South Wales' Regional Tourism Fund provides grants of up to \$150,000 to support projects that will drive increased overnight visitation, and the money is also matched dollar-for-dollar by the applicant.

Richie Robinson, General Manager of Destination Riverina-Murray, welcomed the backing and says financial injections such as these can be a game-changer for regional economies. He is also urging other tourism operators to take advantage with further funding available from the Regional Tourism Fund to support the local tourism industry in NSW.

"It's vital for the growth and success of the Riverina Murray region that we harness these funding opportunities when they are in reach. Destination Riverina Murray worked closely with both Kimo Estate and Belisi to develop their product development applications, and I would encourage other local businesses to contact us and take advantage of the resources available.

We are currently assisting a number of projects including cellar doors, farm experiences, event infrastructure and food production. It's exciting to see significant investment in our region and that the effort involved in applying for funding does pay dividends. Projects such as Kimo Estate's eco-hut and Belisi's farm stay cottages will provide a unique experience for visitors, and in turn, will boost our local economies."

Kimo Estate is a wedding and accommodation business on a 7000- acre sheep and cattle property, 12-kilometres west of Gundagai. Guests can choose to stay in some different accommodation styles including two renovated workers cottages and a renovated shearer's quarters. On-site is the acclaimed Eco Hut, known as JR's Hut. Built in 2017, the architecturally designed building has gained international attention thanks to the unique luxury 'glamping' style accommodation, overlooking the Kimo Valley. Owner Dave Ferguson says the funding has been earmarked for a similar structure.

"The demand for JR's Hut is huge and weekends are booked out until December. We hope the new development will ensure Kimo Estate is the premier accommodation offering in the region and a leader in Eco-tourism in New South Wales."

Belisi Equine Park is located 15 minutes north-east of Wagga Wagga's CBD. \$350,000 will be spent to develop the first of four new luxury farm stay cottages, made from recycled shipping containers, a first for the Riverina area. Each self-contained cottage will sleep up to six adults and built on top of a hill allowing visitors a unique view looking back over the city and beyond to the mountain ranges.



Destination Riverina Murray NSW

Belisi Equine Park's Jenni Riethmuller says one of the luxury cottages will also be wheelchair accessible.

'Around 1 in 5 Australians experience a disability. People with a disability, as well as their friends, relations & colleagues, constitute a significant group of consumers, which is why we see it as extremely important to provide a wheelchair accessible cottage with an equal view as the others'

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