Destination Riverina Murray NSW

Riverina Murray

Destination Management Plan

2022-2030

This Destination Management Plan was prepared by SMA Tourism with additional inputs from Meredith Wray Consulting.

AUTHORSHIP

SMA is an international tourism consulting firm, specialising in innovative product development for cultural tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism and culinary (food and wine) tourism.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ART	Australian Regional Tourism	**LLS**	Local Land Services
ATDW	Australian Tourism Data Warehouse	**LTO**	Local Tourism Organisation
CBC	Cross Border Commissioner	**MDBA**	Murray Darling Basin Authority
DMP	Destination Management Plan	**MRT**	Murray Regional Tourism
DNPMG	Destination Network Project Management Group	**MTB**	Mountain Bike(ing)
		NATOC	NSW Aboriginal Tourism Operators Council
DNs	Destination Networks	**NEMA**	National Emergency Management Agency
DNSW	Destination NSW	**NPWS**	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
DPE	Department of Planning and Environment	**NSW**	New South Wales
DRNSW	Department of Regional NSW	**NSWFA**	NSW Farmers Association
DRM	Destination Riverina Murray	**RADO**	Regional Arts Development Organisation
DSNSW	Destination Southern NSW	**RDA**	Regional Development Australia
EA	Ecotourism Australia	**REDS**	Regional Economic Development Strategy
EV	Electric Vehicle	**RMJO**	Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation
FCNSW	Forestry Corporation of NSW	**RMRA**	Riverina Murray Regional Alliance
FWJO	Far West Joint Organisation	**RTO**	Regional Tourism Organisation
Govt	Government	**TA**	Tourism Australia
GSP	Gross State Product	**TRA**	Tourism Research Australia
GVA	Gross Value Add	**VES**	NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030
JO	Joint Organisation	**VFR**	Visiting Friends and Relatives
LALCs	Local Aboriginal Land Councils	**Y/End (YE)**	Year End
LGA	Local Government Area		

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands and waterways that make up the Riverina Murray region on which we live, work and visit. The diverse First Nations people from this region have been caring for country and welcoming visitors for tens of thousands of years before us and still do to this day. We pay respects to past and current Elders and acknowledge the significant contribution made by First Nations people to our visitor economy.

Wagirra Trail and Yindyamarra Sculpture Walk, West Albury. Credit: Destination NSW.

Message from the Riverina Murray Board

Destination Riverina Murray represents one of the largest and most diverse regions in NSW.

This document, our second Destination Management Plan, provides our industry with scale and scope to be creative and collaborative as we develop and deliver experiences that will drive our $2billion contribution to the NSW visitor economy.

Covering nearly 150,000 square kilometres stretching from Mungo to the Mountains, we believe that the Riverina Murray region is perfectly positioned to curate a wide range of sustainable visitor experiences across all seasons. Our Destination Management Plan builds on elements that are truly distinctive across our 22 local government areas:

- Our profile as one of Australia's most prolific (and productive) agricultural regions offers opportunities to unlock unique food and farm experiences.
- Discovering our mighty rivers and waterways opens up touring routes and trails that connect travellers to ancient culture, agricultural heritage and modern communities.
- Creating innovative accommodation and ways to stay makes our country lifestyle real for the visitor, connects them to shared values within the community, and creates a lasting connection with the Riverina Murray region.

We would like to thank all our industry stakeholders for their input and hard work to date. It's exciting to see the strategic direction laid out in this Destination Management Plan, and to imagine the positive impact a strong vibrant visitor economy will have on communities in the Riverina Murray Region in the future!

Overview

Vision

Supporting Riverina Murray stakeholders to develop and showcase the region as an authentic and sustainable agritourism destination that delivers a suite of experiences for visitors to drink, eat, stay and explore and contributes to the regional NSW $25 billion visitor expenditure target by 2030.

Destination Riverina Murray (DRM) is one of seven Destination Networks (DNs) in regional NSW. Its principal role is to represent and coordinate the growth and development of the Riverina Murray visitor economy.

The Riverina Murray region comprises 22 local government areas that are organised into 2 sub-regions – Riverina & Murray: Each has their respective vision for the future, and projects and priorities, which are relevant to the sustainable growth of the region.

The Riverina Murray visitor economy delivered 6.1% of the region's jobs, supports 2,976 businesses and directly delivers 3.4% ($520 million) of the region's Gross Value Add (GVA) which has grown every year since 2010-11 at an average 3.6% pa. The region attracted 6.2 million visitors and 8.4 million visitor nights[1].

The Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan has been prepared to create a collaborative framework to guide the work of local, regional and state visitor economy stakeholders to grow, develop and promote the region's visitor economy to 2030 and contribute to the NSW Government's target to achieve $25 billion in visitor expenditure by 2030.

This Plan sets out five strategic objectives and an associated plan of action for the region from 2022 to 2030, reflecting current market trends and local priorities, and aligning with State Government's NSW Visitor Economy Strategy (VES) 2030:

1. Road to Recovery: Advocate and support workforce growth, capability, and resilience to assist the recovery of the Riverina Murray visitor economy
2. Build the Brand: Position the Riverina Murray as an authentic and sustainable agritourism destination that delivers and promotes a suite of local produce experiences for visitors to drink, eat, stay and explore the region
3. Showcase our Strengths: Develop trails and touring routes, agritourism and new accommodation product at strategic locations to differentiate the Riverina Murray region and grow overnight stays
4. Focus on World Class Events: Support the development and delivery of contemporary events and festivals across the Riverina Murray to attract new visitors
5. Facilitate Growth: Facilitate ways for the Riverina Murray visitor economy to work more sustainably and collaboratively, including in cross border regions

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1 YE December 2019 (pre-Covid-19 health pandemic) Tourism Research Australia visitation data is used as a base measure to recover and grow the visitor economy

Introduction

The aim of the VES 2030 and the Destination Network DMPs is to stimulate economic prosperity, create new jobs and enhance the lifestyles of the people of NSW.

Destination Riverina Murray commissioned the preparation of the Riverina Murray DMP 2022 to 2030 to create a collaborative framework to guide the work of local, regional and state visitor economy stakeholders to grow, develop and promote the region's visitor economy to 2030.

The Riverina Murray DMP has been developed to align with the directions of the VES 2030 developed by Destination NSW (DNSW). The VES 2030 acknowledges regional NSW as a key to the future of the NSW visitor economy. The NSW state-wide target for 2030 is $65 billion in total visitor expenditure. Regional NSW will contribute $25 billion in overnight visitor expenditure to this target. Tourism is identified as one of seven 'engine industries' expected to drive regional NSW economies over the next 18 years and is identified as one of 50 new priorities to drive long-term stimulus impact[2].

Following a review of regional tourism in 2017 the NSW Government, through Destination NSW, established six administrative zones, referred to as DNs. In July 2022, one additional DN was added, Destination Central West NSW, and several other changes were made to DN boundaries to assist the growth of the NSW regional visitor economy.

The seven DNs are:
- Destination Central West NSW
- Destination Country and Outback NSW
- Destination North Coast NSW
- Destination Riverina Murray
- Destination Southern NSW
- Destination Sydney Surrounds North
- Destination Sydney Surrounds South

A Destination Network Project Management Group (DNPMG) was established in September 2021 that comprises the General Managers of each Destination Network as well as representation from Destination NSW.

Importantly, the DNPMG committed to working collaboratively to deliver a suite of seven new DMPs (2022 to 2030) that are aligned to the VES 2030.

A Destination Network DMP planning framework was established to create a consistent and collaborative approach to guide the work of the Destination Networks, consultants and local, regional and state visitor economy stakeholders to consider how to grow, develop and promote the NSW regional visitor economy to 2030.

Dr Meredith Wray (Wray Sustainable Tourism Research & Planning) was engaged by the PMG to coordinate the development of the suite of DMPs and alignment to the VES. Consultants, SMA Tourism (SMA), were engaged from January to July 2022 to prepare the Riverina Murray DMP 2022 to 2030.

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2 NSW 2020 Economic Blueprint

Hillview Farmstay, Mount Adrah. Credit: Destination NSW.

Riverina Murray DMP 2022 to 2030

The Riverina Murray visitor economy region in NSW encompasses 149,000 square kilometres, the third longest navigable river in the world, 16 National Parks, 2 RAMSAR listed wetlands, 1 World Heritage Listed area and 22 local government areas (LGAs) and is home to over 275,000 people (Figure 1).

- **RIVERINA**: Bland, Carrathool, Coolamon, Cootamundra-Gundagai, Griffith, Hay, Junee, Leeton, Lockhart, Murrumbidgee, Narrandera, Snowy Valleys, Temora, Wagga Wagga.
- **MURRAY:** Albury, Balranald, Berrigan, Edward River, Federation, Greater Hume Shire, Murray River and Wentworth.
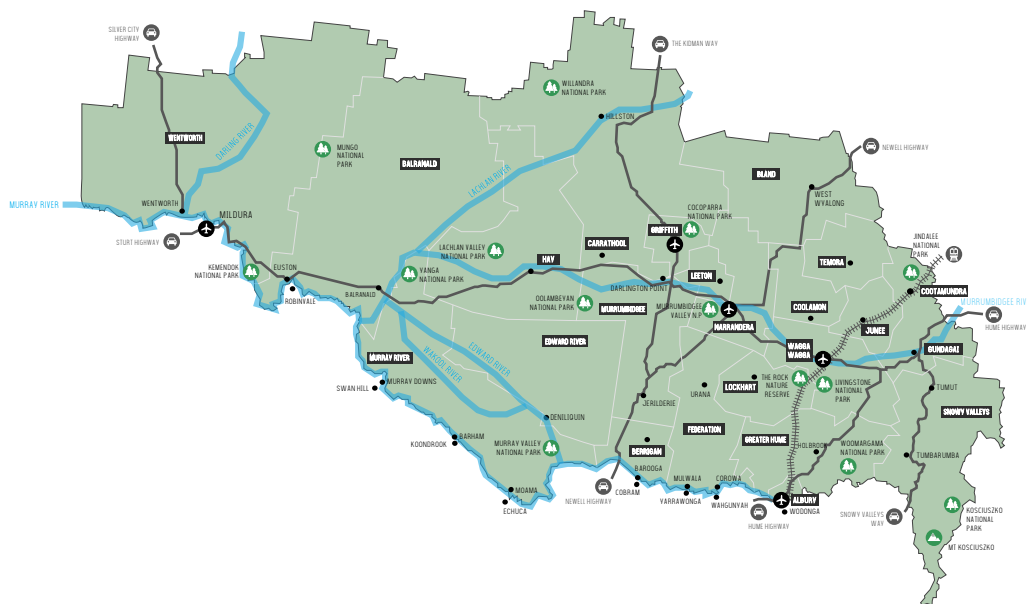

Figure 1. Map of the Destination Riverina Murray region

The Riverina Murray visitor economy delivered 6.1% of the region's jobs, supports 2,976 businesses and directly delivers 3.4% ($520 million) of the region's Gross Value Add (GVA) which has grown every year since 2010-11 at an average 3.6% pa. The region attracted 6.2 million visitors and 8.4 million visitor nights[3].

The destination management planning process involved:

Situation Analysis	• Develop consultation approach • Conduct face to face workshops to facilitate online survey inputs • Analyse survey responses and debrief DRM Board • Desktop review of relevant plans • Analysis of relevant visitor data
Draft DMP	• Develop introduction and strategic context, vision and positioning • Identify targets and visitor profile • Document strategic objectives, regional and local priorities • Document roles and responsibilities • Prepare an Action Plan and Roles and Responsibilities
Final DMP	• DRM Board review and feedback on Draft DMP • DMP Project Consultant review and feedback on Draft DMP • Regional stakeholder review of Consultation Draft DMP • Destination NSW and Tourism Minister review of DMP • Full graphic design production of Final DMP, Launch DMP

Figure 2. Destination Management Planning process

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3 YE December 2019 (pre-Covid-19 health pandemic) Tourism Research Australia

Strategic Context

The Rock Nature Reserve - Kengal Aboriginal Place. Credit: Destination NSW.

Strategic Context

The Riverina Murray DMP 2022 to 2030 has been developed to align with the directions of the VES 2030. The strategy comprises three phases:

RECOVERY PHASE TO 2024 — The focus of this phase is to assist businesses and the industry to rebuild.
The goal is to return total visitor expenditure to pre-COVID levels ($43 billion in 2019).

MOMENTUM PHASE TO 2026 — A number of major infrastructure projects will be completed during this period, including the new Western Sydney Airport in 2026. This will provide a major stimulus to grow and expand the visitor economy in NSW. Visitor expenditure is expected to grow strongly during this time to reach over $50 billion by 2026.

ACCELERATE PHASE TO 2030 — By 2030, the momentum gained through the increased capacity and investment in the visitor economy over the previous phases will accelerate growth, with visitor expenditure targeted to reach $65 billion.

Figure 3. VES 2030 phases

Ambitions, Outcomes and Targets

The ambitions, outcomes and targets of the VES 2030 are important indicators to this DMP.

AMBITIONS

- Economic prosperity, jobs and lifestyle opportunities for the people of NSW
- A compelling destination brand and iconic and world-renowned visitor experiences
- Sustainable visitor destinations and world-class infrastructure
- Vibrant tourism, transport, retail, sports, events, 24-hour economy, arts and creative industries
- Globally connected business and education sectors

OUTCOMES

Grow the NSW visitor economy

8% Contribution to Gross State Product (GSP) by 2030 (6% in 2019)

+10% Visitor economy job growth by 2030 (296,000 jobs in 2019)

VISITOR EXPENDITURE TARGETS

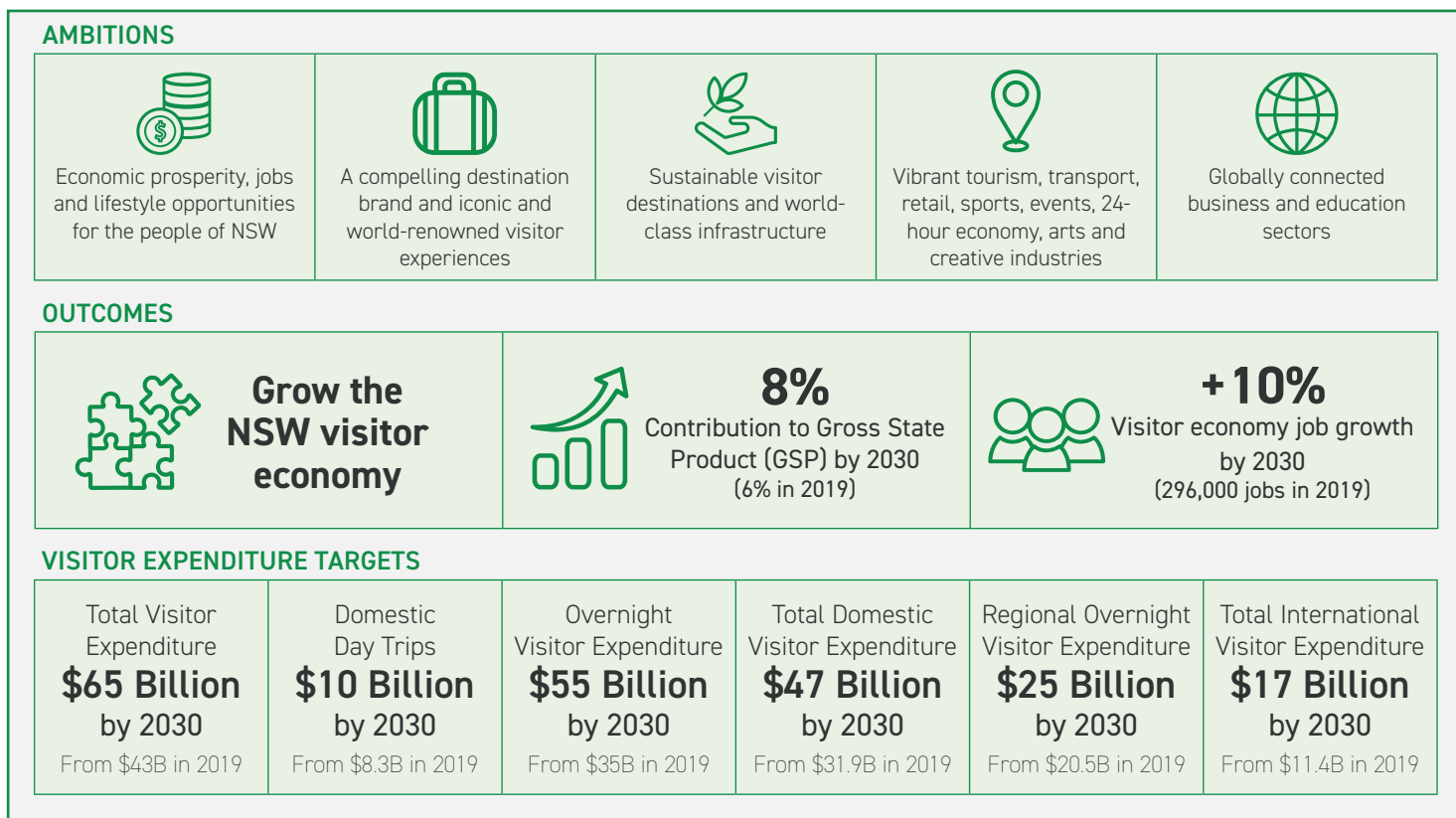| Total Visitor Expenditure	Domestic Day Trips	Overnight Visitor Expenditure	Total Domestic Visitor Expenditure	Regional Overnight Visitor Expenditure	Total International Visitor Expenditure
$65 Billion by 2030 From $43B in 2019	**$10 Billion** by 2030 From $8.3B in 2019	**$55 Billion** by 2030 From $35B in 2019	**$47 Billion** by 2030 From $31.9B in 2019	**$25 Billion** by 2030 From $20.5B in 2019	**$17 Billion** by 2030 From $11.4B in 2019

Figure 4. VES 2030 – ambitions, outcomes, and visitor expenditure targets

Guiding Principles

Five Guiding Principles inform the NSW Government's policy and investment in the visitor economy.

PUT THE VISITOR FIRST	ACCELERATE DIGITAL INNOVATION	LEAD WITH OUR STRENGTHS	MOVE FAST, BE RESPONSIVE AND AGILE	COLLABORATE WITH INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT
We have put the visitor front and centre of this strategy. A greater understanding of potential visitors by segment will deliver high performance marketing solutions and improve the visitor experience.	We will use technology to deliver personalised marketing to potential visitors, streamlined interactions between government and industry, and to enhance the visitor experience.	We will focus on the distinctive character and features of NSW and our people to help us stand out in a crowded market.	We will build agility into the way we operate so we can take advantage of opportunities as they emerge and adapt to changing conditions.	We will foster greater engagement and cooperation with the industry to deliver the vision and take a whole-of-government approach to growing the NSW visitor economy.

Table 1. NSW Government Five Guiding Principles for visitor economy policy and investment

Strategic Pillars

Five Strategic Pillars have been established to guide visitor economy growth to 2030.

1. Road to Recovery
2. Build the Brand
3. Showcase our Strengths
4. Focus on World Class Events
5. Facilitate Growth

These pillars and associated key result areas are explained further on page 36.

Food I Am, Wagga Wagga. Credit: Destination NSW.

Other Considerations relevant to the Riverina Murray

NSW Government Plans and Strategies

- The Riverina Murray DMP 2022 to 2030 has also been developed to align with the broader NSW Government strategic context and to recognise how different NSW Government priorities and strategies may influence the growth and development of the regional visitor economies (see Appendix 1 for a list of strategies reviewed).

- Of particular relevance to this DMP is:

  » *The Future Ready Regions Strategy* – to streamline planning requirements to make it easier for primary producers to diversify into agritourism and carry out agricultural operations

  » *Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan* - the consolidation of the regional 'hub and spoke' model, recognising Wagga Wagga as a central hub for the Riverina; recognising challenges facing NSW communities adjoining Victoria; upgrading the Sturt and Kidman Highways; introducing seamless cross-border travel to Victoria; and improving rail and road connections to Inland Rail

  » *Invest NSW: Independent Brewers Action Plan 2020* – develop food, wine and ale trails; assist independent brewers to develop export ready tourism experiences that are suitable to various international visitors (through Destination NSW's NSW First Program); and assist independent brewers with export ready visitor experiences to promote their products to the international travel trade.

  » *NSW Rail Trail Framework 2022* – The NSW Government supports the development of Rail Trails where there is demonstrated community support, where environmental impacts have been considered, and where a viable business model is in place. With two pilot projects underway and the potential for future projects across NSW, a detailed and consistent NSW Rail Trails Framework is needed to provide clear guidance on the establishment of NSW Rail Trail projects that leverage identified benefits.

Regional Plans and Strategies

Draft Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041

This regional plan contains a number of recommendations pertinent to this DMP:

- The department will develop waterfront development guidelines to inform development as well as strategic and statutory planning to better manage the competing land uses along river corridors and riverine land. The guidelines will provide best practice design principles to support a regionally consistent approach to the design and siting of development and land uses on riverine land.

- Provide for short-term accommodation and align with the Regional Housing Taskforce recommendations from February 2022

- Riverfront activation strategies will need to carefully consider the impacts of hazards such as flooding and a changing climate when considering opportunities to activate these spaces

- Strategic and statutory planning is to consider areas that can be embellished to provide tourism, recreation and public open space opportunities that support the principles of the Public Spaces Charter

- Local Strategic Planning Statements for LGAs adjoining the Murray River should provide an overview of the cross-border issues for the LGA including inter-relationships, inter-dependencies, and drivers of change

- In collaboration with local communities, councils are to undertake strategic planning that recognises and celebrates local character of places and their people, enhances the vitality of centres, and improves economic viability. Initiatives may include public domain improvements, public art, community events, markets and festivals, and local housing to promote activation, dining and the night-time economy

- Support, protect and leverage airport transport facilities.

Regional Plans and Strategies (continued)

Draft Far West Regional Plan 2041

This regional plan contains a number of recommendations pertinent to this DMP:

- Strategic and statutory planning should support and promote tourism activities by:
  - » reviewing planning controls to ensure they support and enable tourism development in appropriate locations
  - » supporting events and festivals carried out on public land without development consent
  - » integrating with cross-border communities and neighbouring councils for major tourism projects and value add opportunities.
- People visit from around Australia and the world to embrace the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage and the unique and accessible outback experiences.
- Provide vibrant centres with community and connectivity that include services and amenities critical to attracting, developing, and sustaining the industry sectors, as well as providing high amenity to residents and visitors.

NSW & VIC Regional Economic Development Strategies

The REDS identify regional specialisations and engine industries as evidence to prioritise government investment. There are seven NSW REDs in the Riverina Murray (noting the REDS region is not exactly the same area as the DRM visitor economy area), with REDS specifically for: Albury; Eastern Riverina, Murray, South-West Slopes, Snowy Valleys, Western Murray and Western Riverina. For Victoria, there are four applicable REDS specifically for: Mallee, Ovens-Murray, Loddon-Campaspe and Goulburn regions. The current REDS are being updated and DRM has been involved in the review process.

Mungo National Park, Mungo. Credit: Destination NSW.

Other Considerations relevant to the Riverina Murray (continued)

Local Government Plans and Strategies

- The five current Destination Management Plans (or equivalent) identified as operating in the region are reviewed in Appendix 2
- The Cootamundra-Gundagai Agritourism Strategy that revealed a creative list of emerging/potential new agritourism products to pursue that could be considered for the wider region
- 15 economic development plans addressing the visitor economy were also reviewed and their most pertinent findings captured in Appendix 3. The product pillar emphasis was found to be on agritourism, accommodation and nature tourism.
- 22 Community Strategy Plans (CSP's) identifying opportunities for community and economic development in local government areas. (Appendix 4)

Cross Border Issues and Opportunities

The southern portion of the region is what is known as a cross-border area. This status can be an advantage (as funding can be sourced from both State Governments) but is often a disadvantage in the coordination of service and infrastructure delivery, fragmentation of government, duplication of resources, and varying approaches to regulation and red tape.

Some of the specific issues include:

- The different ownership and legislation governing land use along both sides of the Murray is seen as a major barrier in riverfront development – the border is on the Victorian side of the river and includes the river-bank, which increases the difficulty of projects along the southern side
- Much of the Victorian side of the river is Crown Land, which also limits opportunities for development – the NSW side of the river is predominantly in private ownership, therefore development is somewhat dependent on owner's intentions
- In both jurisdictions, there are other restrictions related to environmental and water management – cross-border issues also impact on the location of boat moorings and licensing for tour operators and fishing
- During the height of the COVID-19 epidemic (2020 to 2022), the border between Victoria and NSW was closed several times for lengthy periods. This caused the border communities to become the most impacted communities in Australia, from an economic and social perspective
- A new DMP is currently being developed for the Murray Region (Victoria and NSW cross-border communities) by Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) and a single market analysis has been prepared for this DMP that analysed each region but also contrasted them to maximise how they are similar and different. This has maximised integration and minimised undesirable duplication, particularly for border-based visitor economies and communities.

Sandhills Artefacts, Narrandera. Credit: Narrandera Tourism.

Trends Influencing Visitor Demand

The Covid-19 health pandemic has resulted in a range of new consumer trends related to travel decision planning.

The following provides an overview of the main trends influencing recovery from the pandemic as sourced from travel research commissioned in 2022 that is also relevant to regional NSW visitor economy growth and development. It is recommended that continual monitoring of consumer trends be undertaken to 2030[4].

TREND	DESCRIPTION
Edventures / Mixing Work & Play	Is about combining education and holidays for the youngest members of the family. While adults may need to telework or attend meetings, their children can be doing workshops and learning in a playful way – workcations.
Transformative Travel Experiences	These are experiences that are less about just looking at things and more about experiencing something new that engages and connects visitors, in a meaningful way, to the place, its history and heritage and its people.
Conscious Travel	Travel to more distant destinations, but with prolonged durations of stay, as consumers look to enjoy as much of each place they visit as possible.
Green Travel	Climate change is a problem that is present and growing. Consumers now are much more responsible and aware of the reality they live in on a daily basis.
Rural Experiences	Rural and regional destinations in Australia will continue to benefit from the desire of source markets for city escapes that continue to boost domestic tourism.
New faces and places	2022 will finally be the time to branch out and make new connections with 55% wanting to meet new people while away. A resurgence of vacation romances is also likely, with 41% hoping for one on their next trip.
Travel as Self Care	Travel will become an essential form of self-care. Travellers agree that travel helps their mental and emotional wellbeing more than other forms of self-care.
Community First	Authentic connection with the local community will be a priority. Travellers agree it's important that their trip is beneficial to the local community at their destination.
Just Say Yes	People will be saying YES to travel, making up for lost vacation time with travellers now more open to different types of vacations.
Embracing the Unpredictable	People will use technology to embrace travels continued unpredictability with travellers agreeing that technology will be more important than ever while on vacation.

Table 2. Trends influencing visitor demand

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4 See more at https://www.unwto-tourismacademy.ie.edu/2021/08/tourism-trends-2022, https://skift.com/megatrends-2022/, https://skift.com/megatrends-2022/

Growing the Riverina Murray Visitor Economy

Wagirra Trail and Yindyamarra Sculpture Walk, Albury. Credit: Albury City Council and Destination Riverina Murray.

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Growing the Riverina Murray Visitor Economy

Growing the Riverina Murray Visitor Economy will initially require strategies to continue to recover from impacts of bushfires and the Covid-19 health pandemic to 2024, followed by growth strategies to stimulate the visitor economy to 2030.

Covid-19 Impacts

In March 2020 the Commonwealth Government closed its international borders due to the rapid spread of Covid-19 virus. Domestic travel to NSW was constrained by Public Health Orders resulting in numerous lockdowns and restrictions on intrastate and interstate movement.

The disruption to the tourism sector in 2020 was unprecedented. The immediate halt to people movement to prevent the spread of Covid-19 was significant to the industry in Australia and worldwide that experienced: a sudden halt in international visitation; restrictions on domestic mobility; and increased health and safety concerns. Australia's proactive management approach to the pandemic played a key role in protecting domestic demand for tourism despite ongoing disruptions to the tourism industry[5].

The Murray region, due to the nature of the cross-border communities and the reliance on Victorian visitors was more heavily affected by COVID than most of NSW.

At Y/End Dec 2021 the number of total visitors to the Riverina Murray region was 4.2 million or 32 per cent below the pre-Covid period (year 2019).

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5 Tourism Research Australia, Tourism Investment Monitor 2019-20. Australian tourism investment and COVID-19 impacts

Yarran Wines, Yenda. Credit: Destination Riverina Murray.

Recovery Goals

The focus of the goal Recovery Phase to 2024 is to assist businesses and the industry to rebuild and return total visitor expenditure to pre-COVID levels.

The following figure highlights the 2019 (pre-Covid) visitor economy achievements versus the Y/End 2021 impacts.

Y/END DEC 2019 (pre-covid)		Y/END DEC 2021
6.2 million visitors		**4.2 million** visitors
8.4 million visitor nights		**9.3 million** visitor nights
$1.74 billion visitor expenditure		**$1.18 billion** visitor expenditure
2.8 million domestic overnight visitors		**1.9 million** domestic overnight visitors
3.3 million domestic daytrip visitors		**2.3 million** domestic daytrip visitors
59,000 international visitors		**n/a** international visitors
9,143 people directly employed in tourism		**8,902 people directly employed** in tourism
3,521 people indirectly employed in tourism		**2,947 people indirectly employed** in tourism

Figure 5. 2019 (pre-Covid) visitor economy indicators versus 2021 outcomes[6]

NB: A detailed market analysis was undertaken as part of the Situational Analysis to inform the development of this DMP.

6 International visitation data is not statistically reliable for YE December 2021

Product & Experience Analysis

A review of product and experience research across the Riverina Murray was undertaken during the destination management planning process to inform the development of the Riverina Murray DMP.

Product Audit

In April 2022 a product audit was undertaken (by consultants, Urban Enterprise) to count and assess the quality and maturity across the main product and experience categories (see Figure 6).

Key findings showed:

- **A very conventional product mix across the Riverina Murray** region that doesn't currently reflect the themes of agritourism, Indigenous, nature, spa and wellness experiences
- **Almost half the product counted was Food and wine ferments** (49%), but dominated by conventional eateries and with just 2% being Farm gates, and breweries and distilleries representing 1% each, and there was no other agritourism counted
- **Just 13% was nature-based tourism**
- **Just 12% was arts and culture**, dominated by small museums
- **Just 8% was history and heritage**, dominated by buildings and monuments and just 6% Indigenous cultural tourism experiences
- **The region has a mature middle of the road suite of businesses**, with just 1% of businesses being new; and 1% of facilities being of a high quality
- **There is also no evidence of official or popularist hero experiences** (experiences being marketed as central to the region or a must do).
- **There was also no local government area representing a dominance of product**:
  - » 7 to 8% of product each in Cootamundra – Gundagai, Murray River, Albury, Wagga Wagga, Greater Hume, Federation
  - » 4 to 5% of product each in Griffith, Wentworth, Narrandera, Coolamon, Bland, Leeton and Hay
  - » 2 to 3% of product each for Balranald, Temora, Junee, Edward River, Berrigan, Murrumbidgee, and Lockhart.
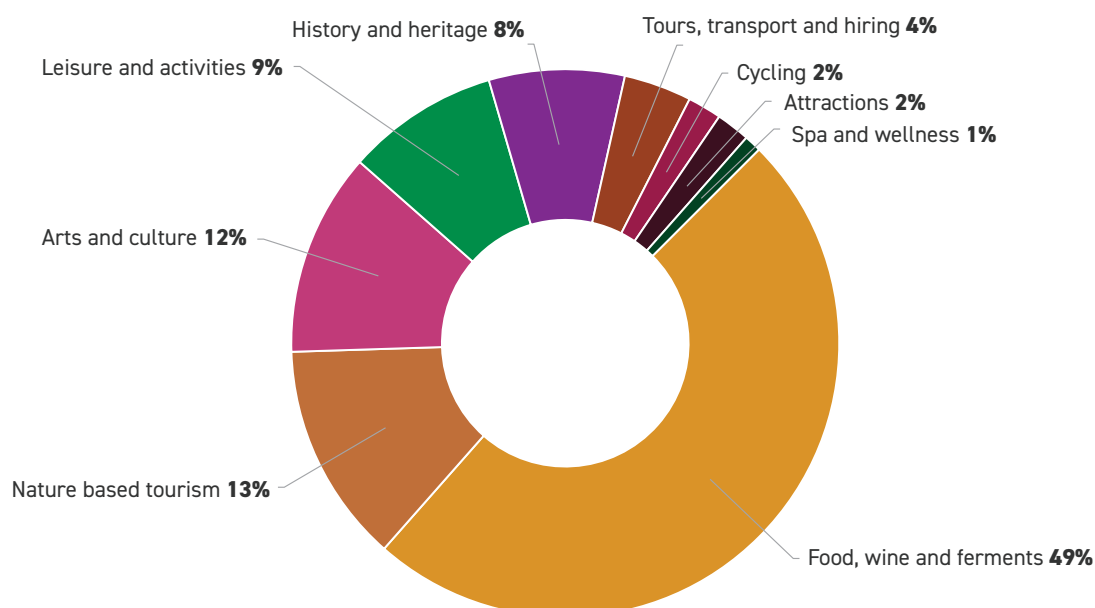
Figure 6. Distribution of products across the Riverina Murray

Product Audit (continued)

Analysis of Riverina Murray products was also categorised to align with the VES 2030 product categories. Findings show the region is dominated by products in the 'Small-Town Charm' category (65%), followed by 'Reconnect in Nature' (23%), with quite low representation for the other categories, including the emerging categories.
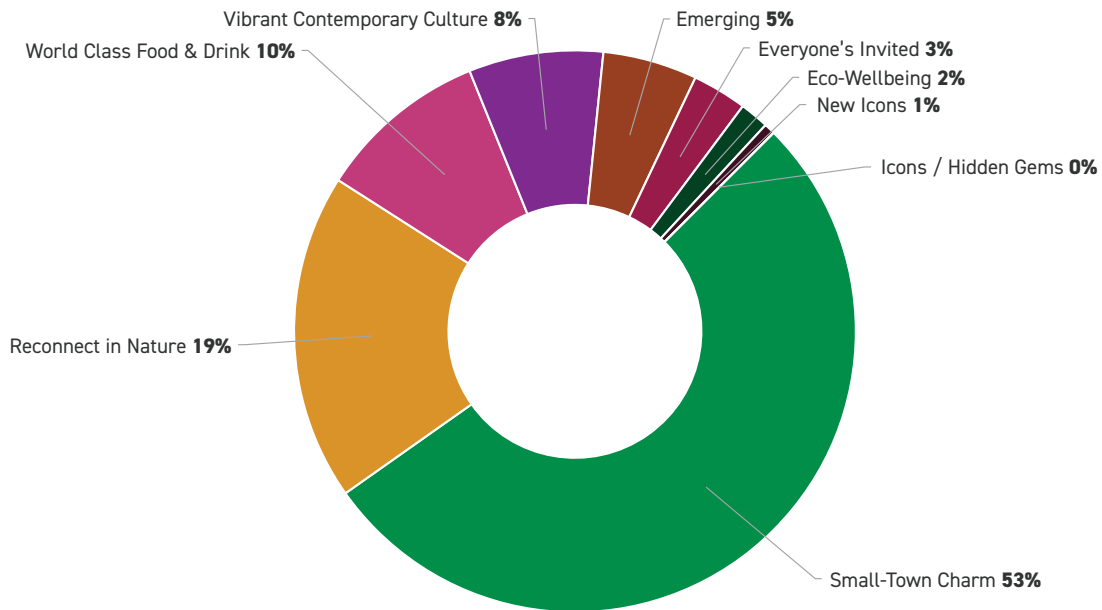
Figure 7. Distribution of NSW VES product category products across the Riverina Murray

Product Strengths & Gaps

The previous Riverina Murray DMP 2018 to 2021 identified nine product strengths for the region, and later featured many of them in its strategic development framework.

During consultation for this DMP, stakeholders rated these strengths at this point in time as primary, secondary, emerging, not a strength or not applicable.

Overall, stakeholders suggested that the:

- Primary strengths of the region are Events and festivals, Sport and recreation and Rivers and waterways
- These same strengths were the greatest drivers of visitation to the region
- The top two emerging products as:
    - » Distinctive / differentiated accommodation
    - » Business and conferencing
- The products rated as having the greatest overall gap were:
    - » Arts and culture
    - » Dining and local produce
- Almost every product category in the region currently has significant gaps in its offer (except for Sport and recreation)
- The top three products rated as having the greatest critical gaps are outlined in the table over the page.

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Product Strengths & Gaps (continued)

PRODUCT GAP	COMMENTS
Differentiated & overall accommodation shortage	A lack of differentiated accommodation that meets the needs of emerging markets visiting the region, the dominant accommodation product is pubs and motels, which is not aligned with visitor markets wanting space, privacy, views and self-contained facilities In most areas the accommodation (including pubs and motels) is heavily booked with trades persons working on major infrastructure projects (solar arrays, wind farms and roads), mines and agriculture, expected to continue for at least 10 years The region cannot capture much of the potential overnight leisure market and subsequently generate more economic benefits. Not being able to capture the overnight leisure market stops this basic economic model from generating economic benefit.
Insufficient agritourism & local dining & produce	The region is known as the food bowl of NSW, with agriculture the dominant industry sector, and the largest regional contribution to agricultural production in Australia ($3.1 billion). There is a disproportionate lack of agritourism and associated local dining and produce to capitalise on this point of regional differentiation World Class Food and Drink is a major strength identified in the NSW VES 2030. The Riverina Murray is a natural region to help deliver this strength and attract visitors to NSW. To effectively leverage its point of difference, the region needs to increase the number, accessibility and quality of local dining and produce, especially in spectacular settings, such as riverfront areas. This means adding more product beyond the few regional centres where they are currently clustered and increase the number, diversity and accessibility of agritourism experiences. This offer should go beyond paddock to plate concept that fits nicely with small-scale boutique food production and highlight » how food is grown, irrigated, produced and distributed; and » the sustainability challenges in food production » how to choose food that reflects one's values.
Insufficient experiences along rivers & waterways	Rivers and waterways were identified as the overall lead nature-based tourism asset for the region. However, the experience in these environments is very underdeveloped. For example, there are: » insufficient facilities to provide easy and reliable access for various vessels » few walking trails along the edges and virtually no circular routes that avoid doubling back » very few facilitated experiences and guided tours on or on the edges of the rivers and waterways » very few dining and drinking experiences on the edges of the rivers and waterways » very few differentiated accommodation opportunities on the edges of the rivers and waterways. Compounding this, is a very lean budget allocation for protected area managers.

Table 3. Riverina Murray key product gaps

Challenges to Visitor Economy Growth

Stakeholders further suggested that the three biggest barriers to growth for the region were:

1. **Accessing sufficient suitable staff to operate (54% of respondents)**
2. **Attracting domestic markets back into the region (43%)**
3. **Getting finance for reinvigoration or development (42%).**

Insufficient staff and volunteers

During the two-year height of COVID-19, many regional workers in the visitor economy left their employment, were laid off or returned to their home state or country. Many transitioned into alternative employment that they are now content with. There are not enough people available or prepared to work in regional Australia, including the Riverina Murray. Some of the components to this issue include:

- Extreme difficulty attracting residents into the region and into employment in the visitor economy, after leaving it during COVID-19 constraints
- A lack of qualified / experienced event managers in small and regional towns - especially small towns
- A dwindling volunteer base to operate visitor information centres, museums and deliver festivals and events.
- A culture of young people moving away from regional areas for study and work opportunities

Consequently, there are not enough staff in most of the region's visitor economy businesses to fully operate and meet demand. Some of the consequences of this barrier include:

- Businesses are scaling back their offer (causing less availability and profitability, less service lower quality)
- Owners are stressed and not able to attend to strategic roles and tasks
- The industry is not in a position to support stimulus that increases visitation (eg., campaigns and events).

Some stakeholders also identified significant time delays associated with attracting international workers (including backpackers), and legal constraints to attracting schoolchildren into hospitality where alcohol is served.

Stakeholders proposed to target over 60s residents, as it could be a good way to stay actively engaged in the community, many might be very interested in extra income, and split shifts are less of a concern to them. Attracting this sector would require shifting some cultural attitudes in some businesses and motivating and assisting the retirees.

Insufficient residential accommodation

Australia's house price growth has for many years been rising steeply, but in the last few years this has extended to regional areas, including the Riverina Murray. For example, in the Riverina, the median house in Wagga Wagga in 2021 was $470,000, having risen 40.3% from 2016 to 2020. This increase is fuelled by many factors, including increasing numbers of 'Treechangers' moving into regional Australia after COVID-induced lockdowns in the cities.

The price of residential property has risen beyond the growth of most worker income, and despite a record period of low interest home loans, many people with limited income and savings can no longer afford to purchase a house. This increasing disparity is most affecting low-income earners with low savings, which includes the transient parts of the visitor economy (eg., hospitality workers and housekeepers) and young adults in local towns and regional centres, which is quickening the loss of working youth. The region is currently projected to need approximately 13,400 new dwellings by 2041[7].

The shrinking supply of residences for sale has also intensified demand for rental properties. Stakeholder consultation for this DMP confirms that the problem is widespread across the Riverina Murray, from regional centres to small towns. The high cost and limited supply or residents for sale and rent is also limiting the ability to recruit staff into the region to fill employment gaps in the visitor economy and many other industries. This is compounding visitor economy staff shortages.

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7 NSW Department of Planning & Environment population projections 2019 https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Research-and-Demography/Population-projections/Projections

Challenges to Visitor Economy Growth (continued)

Insufficient residential accommodation (continued)

The situation is unlikely to get better without significant intervention. There are approximately 8,000 construction / project jobs in the region's pipeline that will seek to place temporary workers in residences. There is a shortage of estates in planning or development and a shortage of tradespeople to build houses.

Access to and use of market intelligence

The availability of regional market data to assist with decisions on product development and positioning is very limited and generally not connected to or adequately used by operators. The data that is available is generally of little value to operational decision-making. For example, there is little to no market research driven insights on unmet visitor needs, satisfaction with different sectors / experiences, and suggested improvements to motivate recommendations and repeat visits. Consequences of this situation include:

- Misunderstandings and generalisations regarding broad term markets such as Grey Nomads and Baby Boomers;
- Minimal consideration of target markets and specialisation, resting more on being all things to all people; and
- Minimal stimulus and direction towards innovation in product development / reinvigoration and marketing.

Getting domestic markets back into the region

Tourism businesses would normally place this barrier higher up their list, but the lack of staff is keeping it down, because there is a lack of capability to meet a surge in demand, such as that experienced during school holidays.

Stakeholders prioritising this issue are seeking ways to create a gentle, steady increase in visitors outside of the school holidays, at levels that they can accommodate. Operators are not fussy where visitors come from and consider that domestic sources should start with the more accessible regional centres of the Riverina Murray, Visiting Friends and Relatives, passing through traffic conversions to overnight and getting transient workers to explore the region as leisure visitors in their time off.

Getting finance for reinvigoration or development

The third highest scoring barrier to growth rated by stakeholders was getting finance for reinvigoration or development (42%). Issues reported included:

- There are too many grants being given out for too small amounts, limiting the realisation of any one initiative, would be more sustainable to award fewer recipients with more funds to finish an initiative;
- There are applicants accessing development funds that do not have the maintenance funds to look after their asset afterwards – this should be part of the assessment criteria;
- Short turn-around times to respond to Destination NSW funding (3-6 weeks generally, without advance warning and adequate guidelines);
- Heritage grants being too small to make a real difference, and overly bureaucratic for the funding available (grants from NSW Heritage Office).

Some operators are struggling to source bank finance because their cash flow over the past few years has been so low due to lock downs, and they have used up cash reserves during the same period. These operators would like to see government offer low interest loans for regionally significant projects delivered by the private sector.

Some small local government stakeholders advised that they cannot participate because they cannot raise the seed funding to match the grant available.

Weethalle Silo Art, Weethalle. Credit: Destination NSW.

Griffith Spring Fest 2019, Griffith. Credit: Destination NSW.

Vision & Positioning

Vision & Positioning

The following vision and values were created from findings of the destination management planning process:

Vision

Supporting Riverina Murray stakeholders to develop and showcase the region as an authentic and sustainable agritourism destination that delivers a suite of experiences for visitors to drink, eat, stay and explore and contributes to the regional NSW $25 billion visitor expenditure target by 2030.

Positioning Considerations

The current positioning of the Riverina Murray is driven by nature, heritage and culture, with subtle support from lifestyle and agritourism.

A new, formal positioning identity and story statement for the Riverina Murray is therefore needed, one that focuses more on its agritourism strengths and potential. Moreover, it positions the region as an authentic place to visit, not just pass through, brought about through a suite of integrated but differentiated themed trails, and a suite of agritourism and rural experiences that become the heart and soul of what the region has to offer.

These experiences will take visitors beyond farm gates and paddock to plate to share the challenges and success of sustainably growing enough food to feed all Australians. This would include water management, connection and use across the region. They will show people how we grow food and then deliver a suite of experiences to drink, eat, explore and stay, that match it. Finally, they will reveal and empower visitors to choose fresh and sustainable food and not just eat it.

This positioning does not discount the many other product elements that make up the region. It, however, provides a focus to develop a differentiated and authentic positioning and range of products that harness the strength and character of the region.

Table 4 demonstrates how the proposed new positioning for the Riverina Murray connects with the NSW VES 2030 ambitions and product pillars.
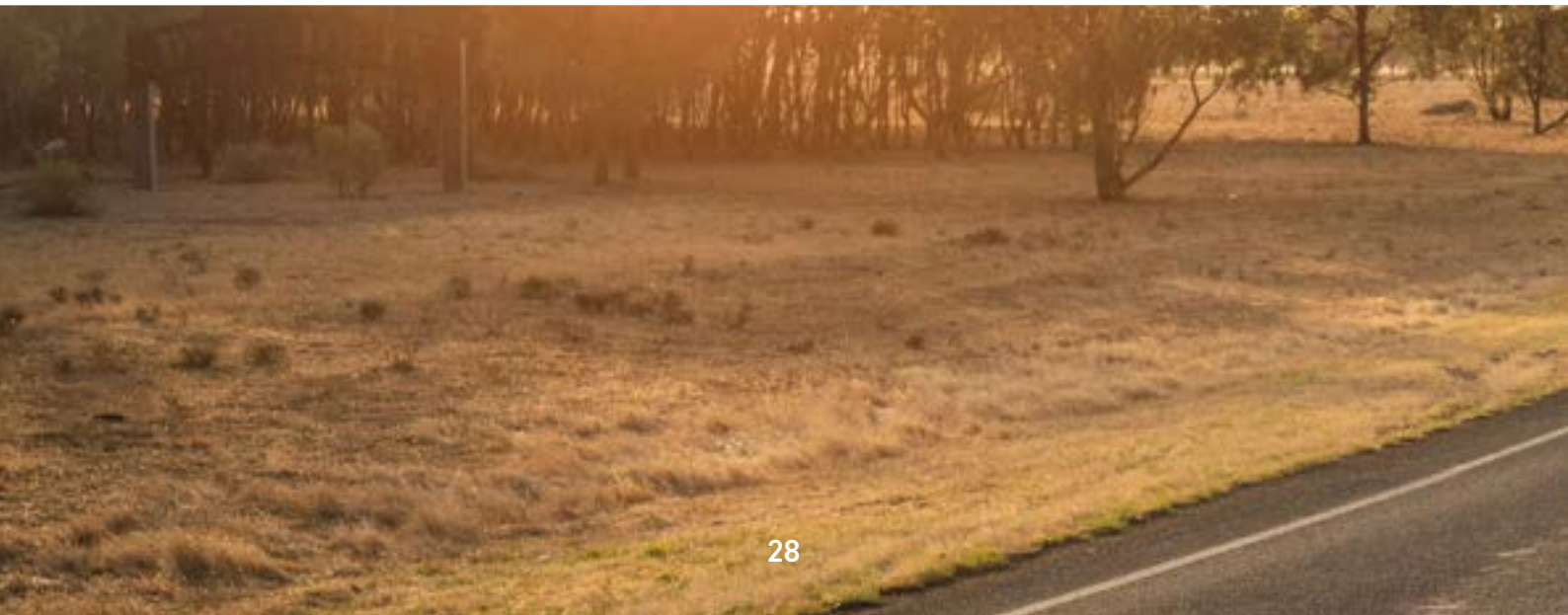
Positioning Considerations (continued)

NSW VES 2030 ambitions	Riverina Murray positioning delivery
Economic prosperity, jobs and lifestyle opportunities for the people of NSW	Revealing rural lives associated with growing, making and serving food in regional areas associated with freedom, safety and lower stress
A compelling destination brand and iconic and world-renowned visitor experience	Interpretive experiences that connect visitors with the essence of the Riverina Murray as the food bowl of NSW
Sustainable visitor destinations	Various initiatives to reduce environmental impact, mitigate for climate change and lobby for better management of the Murray & Murrumbidgee Rivers and associated waterways
NSW VES 2030 product pillars	**Riverina Murray positioning delivery**
World-Class Food and Drink	Bringing together a combination of interpretation experiences about growing food in innovative and sustainable ways, and consuming food with reverence and in different settings

Table 4. How this vision connects with the NSW VES 2030 ambitions and product pillars

There is also a need to consider whether to continue positioning the region as one Riverina Murray or a suite of geographical clusters. The vast region has large spaces of uneventful driving in between its lead towns and regional centres. There are many parts of the region not particularly focused on the visitor economy. Given this and previous barriers to growth, it raises the question of whether public funding can continue to give everyone everywhere resourcing support, or whether it should cluster effort where there is greatest growth leverage?

Many stakeholders contributing to this Plan stressed that the Riverina name and brand is not strong within the visitor economy. It is further complicated by the fact that the Riverina is applied as a broader economic, agricultural, and political name with various differing boundaries.

Stakeholders questioned whether one brand name for the entire region was worthwhile, or whether a suite of smaller regions with a more definitive brand essence and greater potential leverage for growth was more realistic for positioning and marketing. This notion also flowed through to public and private sector investment focus in these more defined sub-regions.

30km Cycle Loop, Deniliquin. Credit: Rob Mulally.

PS Emmylou, Echuca-Moama. Credit: Destination NSW.

Target Markets & Visitor Profiles

Noreuil Park, Albury. Credit: Destination NSW.

Target Markets & Visitor Profiles

Analysis of visitation data related to the main visitor markets for the Murray and Riverina region in the five years pre-Covid-19 (2015 to 2019) revealed that:

- **The region is highly variable and reliant on domestic overnight visitation** of holiday, visiting friends and relatives and business travel
- **The second most important market in attracting overnight stays is the Business market**, and that this market has generated the greatest growth
- **The Holiday market presented the lower overnight stays** and the lowest growth in the region.

Furthermore, the economic benefits from visitation to the Riverina Murray in pre-COVID times, overwhelmingly (between 70% and 75%) came from domestic overnight visitation rather than from domestic day trips or international overnight stays. This is expected to be little changed in the post-COVID period.

With this in mind, it is proposed that the target markets for the region be gradually shifted from 'low hanging fruit' in the Recovery Phase towards higher yielding markets, such as Millennials and Younger Baby Boomers, in response to strengthening of product pillars and an increase in accommodation diversity.

During the Recovery Phase, the target markets are proposed to be Visiting Friends and Relatives and Events and Festivals (Table 5).

MARKET	Recovery Phase to 2024	Growth Momentum 2024 – 2026	Growth Accelerate 2026 – 2030
Visiting Friends and Relatives			
Events and Festivals			
Younger Gen X Families (Parents Born 1975-1980 with preschool and primary aged school children)			
Millennials (Born 1991-1996/ Gen Z (Born 1997-2002)			
Business			
Conventional Grey Nomads (Older Baby Boomers - Born 1946-1954)			
Younger Baby Boomers (Born 1955-1964)			
Working Holiday Makers			
Education sector			

Key:

■ Primary market   ■ Secondary market   ■ Emerging market

Table 5. Proposed visitor markets 2024 to 2030

Overview of main visitor markets

The Visiting Friends and Relatives market

The Visiting Friends and Relatives market (VFR) is proposed to be a target market for the short term only to capture a short-term opportunity. Growth in the VFR market was stifled during the 2020 – 21 COVID-19 lockdowns. With high levels of vaccinations, this market is free to travel as intra-region, intrastate and interstate source markets. This market is ideal because it could take up day trips to attractions and engage in food and wine, and because it is highly likely to stay with friends and relatives, so does not place pressure on the limited accommodation stock. To make the most of this market means marketing opportunities to local hosts so that they can then recommend them to their visitors.

Events and Festivals

The Events and Festivals market is proposed to be a medium-term target market until there is sufficient competitive and differentiated tourism product to take over as a lead motivator to visit. This is a loose term for people attracted to events and festivals from outside the local area, and ideally outside the region. Events and Festivals is an ideal attractor to get the attention of potential markets and trigger a visit that they otherwise may not have made. Source markets are likely to largely be Riverina Murray, southern NSW and Victoria. The two challenges to meeting expectations for this market will be providing suitable accommodation within a 45-minute drive and marketing complementary experiences with the event, to extend length of stay and spend.

Young Gen X / Older Millennial Families

The family market, identified as parents born between 1975-1980 (Young Gen X) and 1980-1985 (older Millennials) with preschool to primary aged children, present a short to medium term opportunity to the region that is larger than normal. International holiday destinations remain problematic for families, due to limited flights, a cautious attitude towards staying in areas with high COVID rates and low-quality hospitalisation and increasing airfares. Consequently, 'safe' domestic alternatives are more appealing than normal.

The family market has been most represented by those travelling with children of primary school age. Families with teenagers are not part of the target market because the region has far less to offer their more adventurous and dynamic needs. The family market has traditionally been concentrated within school holiday periods, which presents challenges for families wanting to stay in anything but tourist / caravan parks, due to the overall shortage of self-contained hard roofed accommodation in the region. A more sustainable approach would be to focus on attracting young families to explore the region within school terms, when there is more accommodation choice available. Some of these families are likely to take the opportunity up because they have pent up desire to travel following the end of lockdowns, and because they have discovered that online schooling can work.

Millennials / Gen Z

The Millennial / Gen Z market, identified as being born between 1991-1996 (younger Millennials) and between 1997-2002 (older Gen Z) have not been a significant portion of visitation to the region, but it needs to become so, as traditional visitor markets contract in the Recovery and especially the Growth Momentum Phase (eg., Grey Nomads). As agritourism is developed in the region in the way proposed in this DMP, it will offer a significant product motivator for this market, who are increasingly motivated to experience local food, wine and spirits in interpretive, social and dining environments. Food and Wine events and festivals will be a key stimulus in attracting this market for the first time. To fully convert this market will require selecting accommodation that matches their needs and packaging it with the food and wine derivations, along with nature tourism that is also a key motivator for travel.

Overview of main visitor markets (continued)

Younger Baby Boomers

The Conventional Grey Nomad market, although highly visible in the region, are not considered to be a sustainable target market in the longer term. The Younger Baby Boomer market, identified as being born between 1955-1964, will gradually replace much of the traditional Grey Nomad market. Compared to the Grey Nomads, the Boomers will have a higher level of education, greater spending capacity and higher expectations for experiences, quality service and authenticity. The Boomers will arrive into the region having thoroughly researched opportunities, and will use digital sources over visitor centres.

Boomers will travel in a variety of forms. Compared to the Grey Nomads, the Boomers travelling with a caravan will have lighter and more self-sufficient vans, capable of some free camping and greater exploring than Grey Nomads. The Boomers may mix and match their accommodation, leaving their van for a night or two per week to stay in eco cabins or a heritage retreat. Other boomers will travel for shorter but more intense trips, targeting the best art galleries, museums, restaurants and quirky localised retail, where they will be prepared to spend more but expect much more than the Grey Nomads.

Business sector target markets

The business market (think tradesmen, health sector, defence, mines and energy) has not been listed as a target market because much of it comes anyway regardless of the product and marketing. Nonetheless, this is the only market to be listed as a Secondary target throughout the DMP lifespan to 2030. The potential of the business market to the region is twofold. First, there is the opportunity to try to shift them from dinner in pubs and back to their room in front of the television, to a wider range of food and beverage and some experiences in their time off, which might just be the last part of an afternoon or a weekend where it makes more sense to stay rather than travel home. The second potential is then to sufficiently impress to trigger a return visit as a leisure market with family or friends.

Whitton Malt House, Whitton. Credit: Destination Riverina Murray.

Overview of main visitor markets (continued)

The Destination Riverina Murray region, consisting of 22 NSW LGAs, and the MRT region, consisting of 13 cross-border LGAs in both Victoria and NSW, of which 7 LGAs are shared between the 2 entities, had both similarities and significant differences in their domestic overnight visitation in the five years pre-COVID:

Similarities across the two regions

- The key similarity was the huge areas of the two regions and their reliance on private car touring

DRM differences

- Business travel and VFR travel was more important in the NSW Riverina Murray region
- The NSW Riverina Murray region has more concentration of its visitor economy on one city with Wagga Wagga having around half the total and 41% of domestic holiday visitor nights. In contrast, the VIC/NSW Murray Cross-Border region has a much wider dispersion of visitation and especially holiday overnight visitation across more widely spaced destinations
- The NSW Riverina Murray region has a comparative specialty in attracting event visitors while the VIC/ NSW Murray Cross-Border region has a broader base of activities with above NSW average utilisation by domestic overnight holiday visitors
- The NSW Riverina Murray region is heavily reliant on motels, hotels (pubs) and similar establishments, and non-commercial caravanning and camping while the VIC/NSW Murray Cross-Border region is more reliant on short term rental accommodation, caravanning and camping
- The primary motivation for people visiting the NSW Riverina Murray region is NOT visitor experiences, it is visiting friends and relatives in smaller towns and access to services in larger regional centres (e.g. in Wagga Wagga it is for Health Services or to attend Army / Defence walk outs), in Junee it is visitors to the Corrections Centre on visiting day. They are not coming for a traditional 'tourism' visit but may want to stay/eat/play while in region.

MRT differences

- Key differences are that the VIC/NSW Murray Cross-Border region had around twice the reliance on holiday domestic visitor nights (48% of total) than did the NSW Riverina Murray region (24% of total)
- The VIC/NSW Murray Cross-Border region has more reliance on standalone holiday destinations rather than holiday visitation as part of a multi-stopover trip
- The VIC/NSW Murray Cross-Border region has a higher percentage of visitation from Victorian travellers, particularly those wanting to engage in water-based or water-adjacent activities (68% of visitors from Victoria).

Table 6. Similarities and differences between the two regions

See Appendix 6 for visitation research tables about visitation to the region from 2015 to 2019.

Hillview Farmstay, Mount Adrah. Credit: Destination NSW.

Strategic Objectives

Kimo Estate, Nangus. Credit: Destination NSW.

Strategic Objectives

Our strategic objectives are designed to coordinate the region's tourism industry to grow the Riverina Murray visitor economy to be fit for the future and align to the VES 2030 strategic pillars.

VES Strategic Pillars	Road to Recovery	Build the Brand	Showcase our Strengths	Invest in World Class Events	Facilitate Growth
	A comprehensive program of marketing and industry development will ensure NSW recovers quickly from the impacts of COVID-19, bushfires, drought and floods and elevates its status as the premier visitor economy in the Asia Pacific.	Compelling new brands will be developed for Sydney and NSW to provide a strong foundation for differentiation, consumer messaging, local pride and competitiveness to turbocharge recovery and accelerate future growth.	NSW is a state of breathtaking diversity and bucket list visitor attractions and experiences. We will focus on existing strengths and develop new opportunities to ensure place making, destination marketing, events and visitor experiences drive visitation.	An accelerated investment in signature sporting and cultural events as well as business events will help position Sydney and NSW as the events capital of the Asia Pacific, drive visitation and enhance the social wellbeing of NSW residents.	Investing in infrastructure, job creation, industry resilience and sustainability, future planning, and better ways to do business will ensure the continued growth and future prosperity of the NSW visitor economy.
Riverina Murray DMP Strategic Objectives	Advocate and support workforce growth, capability and resilience to assist the recovery of Riverina Murray visitor economy.	Position the Riverina Murray as an authentic and sustainable agritourism destination that delivers and promotes a suite of local produce experiences for visitors to drink, eat, stay and explore the region.	Develop trails and touring routes, agritourism and new accommodation product at strategic locations to differentiate the Riverina Murray region and grow overnight stays.	Support the development and delivery of contemporary events and festivals across the Riverina Murray to attract new visitors.	Facilitate ways for the Riverina Murray visitor economy to work more sustainably and collaboratively, including in cross-border regions.

Table 7. Strategic objectives for Riverina Murray visitor economy

Action Plan

Wiradjuri Trail, Wagga Wagga. Credit: Chloe Smith Photography; Visit Wagga Wagga.

Action Plan

The following sections identify actions related to the five Riverina Murray DMP strategic objectives.

Actions align with the three phases of the VES 2030:

- Recovery Phase to 2024
- Growth Momentum to 2026
- Growth Accelerate to 2030

1.0 Road to Recovery

Strategic Objective: Advocate and support workforce growth, capability and resilience to assist the recovery of Riverina Murray visitor economy

Stakeholder consultation to inform this Plan identified the single greatest barrier to growth at this time (2022) is accessing sufficient and suitable staff to operate. This barrier is recognised as a State and National issue, also requiring a State and National response. Nonetheless, stakeholders stressed the barrier is important enough to warrant a regional response within this Plan.

The following actions focus on building industry capability and resilience to best support recovery to return visitation and expenditure to pre-COVID levels by 2024.

ACTION NUMBER	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	SUPPORT PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
1.1	Work with DNSW to deliver NSW First initiatives to strengthen industry sustainability, capability, and resilience	DNSW	DRM RTOs LGAs, LTOs	2022 to 2024
1.2	Work with RTOs, LGAs and LTOs to develop a series of outcome focused workshop and mentorship programs focused on: Regional Tourism Product/Experience Development: Export Ready Businesses: Bookable Product development; and Risk & Governance	DRM	DNSW RTOs LGAs, LTOs	2022 to 2026
1.3	Work with the Destination Network Project Management Group to create an 'Understanding the Regional Visitor Economy Program' to improve understanding of local government, industry and community about the Riverina Murray visitor economy	DNPMG	DRM DRNSW LGAs	2022 to 2024
1.4	Work with the Destination Network Project Management Group to advocate and maximise the opportunities and resources available from external grant funding opportunities to support regional visitor economy resilience and growth	DNPMG	DRM DRNSW	2022 to 2024
1.5	Work with the Destination Network Project Management Group and regional stakeholders to advocate for work force solutions around visitor economy staff and skills and housing shortages	DRNSW	DNPMG DRM	2022 to 2024

1.0 Road to Recovery (continued)

ACTION NUMBER	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	SUPPORT PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
1.6	Work with Resilience NSW and other relevant emergency response and recovery agencies to provide support and encouraged preparedness for emergencies	DRM	Resilience NSW NSW SES DRNSW CBC Office NEMA	2022 to 2030

2.0 Build the Brand

Strategic Objective: Position the Riverina Murray as an authentic and sustainable agritourism destination that delivers and promotes a suite of local produce experiences for visitors to drink, eat, stay and explore the region

As highlighted earlier in this Plan, the Riverina Murray needs to leverage greater awareness of its significance as a food bowl in regional NSW.

The following actions focus on establishing a new positioning and identity strategy for developing, and communicating cooperative marketing opportunities to build the positioning of the Riverina Murray region.

ACTION NUMBER	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	SUPPORT PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
2.1	Work with DNSW to review the brand identity/story for the Riverina Murray region based on its agri strengths that align to the Feel NSW brand	DNSW	DRM LGAs, LTOs	2022 to 2024
2.2	Continue to maintain strong partnerships with RTOs and LGA's to identify cooperative regional marketing opportunities for Riverina Murray stakeholders, including cross-border campaigns	DRM	DNSW RTOs LGAs, LTOs	2022 to 2030
2.3	Work with DNSW, LGA's and LTO's to coordinate famils, content creation and programs that encourage and support awareness and packaging of new and existing products and services, including updates of ATDW listings	DRM	DNSW LGAs, LTOs	2022 to 2030

3.0 Showcase our Strengths

Strategic Objective: Develop trails and touring routes, agritourism and new accommodation product at strategic locations to differentiate the Riverina Murray region and grow overnight stays

Building on the previous objective to position the Riverina Murray as an authentic and sustainable agritourism destination, this strategic objective focuses on developing new Produce, Food and Drink product and experiences at strategic locations across the region including farm experiences, wine, brewing, distilling and dining with local produce. In addition, new, quality accommodation development that reflects the character of the region is important to enable visitors to stay in the area longer.

Investment into these types of products would also provide a more contemporary offer for emerging younger target markets including new experiences related to trails and touring routes that interconnect and interpret attractions (eg., Nature and Aboriginal tourism, Rail Trails, Murray River Adventure Trail, Hume and Hovell Track, Canola Trail).

Strength Areas for product development and promotion in the Riverina Murray have been identified as:

- Agritourism
- Tracks, Trails & Touring Routes
- Nature, Rivers & Waterways
- Cultural, Heritage and Indigenous Tourism

The following actions focus on coordinating programs to support operators to enhance and create products and working collaboratively with visitor economy partners to identify and activate new opportunities.

ACTION NUMBER	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	SUPPORT PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
3.1	Lead the development and implementation of a Riverina Murray Agritourism, Produce, Food and Drink Product & Experience Development Strategy including identification of experience trails and best practice sustainability practice (e.g. the Canola Trail)	DRM	DNSW DRNSW LGAs, LTOs DNPMG NSWFA, LLS RDA, ART	2022 to 2024
3.2	Work with LGAs and LTOs to create a Riverina Murray Tracks, Trails & Touring Routes Plan to include linked and coordinated themed experience trails, itineraries and associated interpretation related to positioning strengths of the Riverina Murray region	DRM	DNSW RTOs LGAs, LTOs	2022 to 2026
3.3	Advocate and support redevelopment of distinctly Riverina Murray heritage tourism offerings such as The Dog on the Tuckerbox	DRM	DNSW DRNSW LGAs, LTOs	2022 to 2026
3.4	Work with RTOs to continue to develop the Murray River Adventure Trail, including product development and infrastructure works on the NSW side of the Murray River	DRM RTOs	DNSW DRNSW NPWS Parks VIC LGAs	2022 to 2026

3.0 Showcase our Strengths (continued)

ACTION NUMBER	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	SUPPORT PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
3.5	Advocate for the development and promotion of the Hume & Hovell Track for inclusion in the Great Walks of Australia collective	DRM	DNSW, DRNSW LGAs Crown Lands NPWS, FCNSW DSNSW	2022 to 2026
3.6	Work with the Destination Network Project Management Group and land tenure holders to identify opportunities for nature-based product and experience development	DNPMG	DNSW DRNSW, RTOs LGAs, LTOs NPWS, FCNSW Crown Lands LALCs Landowners	2022 to 2026
3.7	Provide strategic support to private sector stakeholders (e.g., wineries, breweries, distilleries, restaurants, accommodation developers) to develop new Produce, Food and Drink products and experiences and accommodation that reflects the character of the region	DRM	DNSW DRNSW LGAs RTOs RDA	2022 to 2030
3.8	Develop a Riverina Murray Tracks, Trails & Touring Routes Master Plan that identifies product gaps, opportunities, and interpretation requirements	DRM	DNSW DRNSW LGAs, LTOs RTOs NPWS Crown Lands Transport NSW	2022 to 2026
3.9	Work with the Destination Network Project Management Group to advocate and support the development of new cultural, heritage and aboriginal products and experiences including tailored industry development and support to help bring forward new cultural tourism product development opportunities	DNPMG	DNSW NATOC Museums & Galleries NSW LGAs, LTOs LALCs RTOs RADOs Create NSW RMRA	2022 to 2030

4.0 Invest in World Class Events

Strategic Objective: Support the development and delivery of contemporary events and festivals across the Riverina Murray to attract new visitors

Stakeholder consultation identified that the Riverina Murray had relatively weak product pillars, with the strongest products being Events and Festivals, and Sport and Recreation.

The purpose of this strategic objective is to invest in enabling greater performance in the strongest product pillar for the region - Events and Festivals.

The following actions focus on supporting event organisers and the region's LGAs to improve event coordination and capacity.

ACTION NUMBER	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	SUPPORT PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
4.1	Identify key events that have the potential to be amplified to attract increased or new audience segments and work with event organisers to develop next growth stage	DRM LGAs LTOs	DNSW RTOs	2022 to 2026
4.2	Work with LGAs and LTOs to undertake an audit of sporting facilities in region to determine the most appropriate sporting events that the region can host (regional, State, National or international)	DRM LGAs LTOs	DNSW DRNSW	2024 to 2026
4.3	Support event organisers, LGAs and LTOs to attract new events that have the potential to attract new and repeat visitors to the region (including business events)	DRM	DNSW DRNSW	2022 to 2030
4.4	Continue to advocate and support Golf on the Murray and the Murray Festival of Golf to help grow golf experiences right along the Murray River	DRM RTOs	DNSW LGAs, LTOs	2022 to 2030

Warbirds Downunder Show 2018, Temora. Credit: Peter Morris.

5.0   Facilitate Growth

Strategic Objective: Facilitate ways for the Riverina Murray visitor economy to work more sustainably and collaboratively, including in cross border regions

Stakeholder consultation to inform this Plan identified several opportunities to build capacity and cooperation across the region's visitor economy, as well as opportunities to do more for cross border communities.

Supporting operators to make it easier to do business and working with local and state governments to streamline planning and approvals processes is also important to grow and further develop the region's visitor economy.

In addition, there are many dimensions to sustainability that this Plan could seek to influence, including helping the visitor economy to reduce its carbon footprint and preparing it to mitigate against the impacts of climate change (higher and more variable temperatures, drought and more frequent flooding and bushfires). The region's visitor economy can also highlight and acknowledge sustainable practices in other sectors that it utilises, such as agriculture, and it can champion greater support for conservation of rivers and waterways, and greater resources to support visitor management in protected areas.

The following actions focus on maximising the region's visitor economy stakeholders to work cooperatively to position the regions as an attractive place to invest and to work with partners to develop and disseminate market intelligence to inform new investment opportunities.

ACTION NUMBER	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	SUPPORT PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
5.1	Continue to actively advocate for and support investment in proposed projects that have the potential to grow the region's visitor economy	DRM	DNSW RTOs, TVIC LGAs, LTOs	2022 to 2030
5.2	Work with Destination NSW and the Destination Network Project Management to disseminate and communicate relevant visitor economy research and activity updates to regional stakeholders	DNSW DNPMG	LGAs LTOs	2022 to 2030
5.3	Work with the Destination Network Project Management Group to advocate to the NSW Government and LGAs to streamline planning requirements to better support the growth of the visitor economy	DNPMG	DPE, DNSW DRNSW LGAs, LTOs	2022 to 2030
5.4	Work with the Destination Network Project Management Group to advocate to the Australian and NSW Government to collectively advocate for improved digital and transport connectivity, including EV charging	DNPMG	NSW Govt DNSW	2022 to 2030
5.5	Work with RTOs and LGAs to facilitate famils and networking opportunities to increase awareness of products and experiences and to encourage cooperation across LGA and state boundaries	DRM	LGAs	2022 to 2030
5.6	Work with the Destination Network Project Management Group to leverage opportunities for domestic and international airway and passenger rail route development	DNPMG	DNSW	2024 to 2030

5.0   Facilitate Growth (continued)

ACTION NUMBER	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	SUPPORT PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
5.7	Communicate with industry and key stakeholders on relevant sustainability initiatives, funding, promotion, skills development, and strategic opportunities, and provide support resources for businesses	DRM	DNSW DRNSW LGAs	2026 to 2030
5.8	Work with MRT and other key stakeholders to lobby for changes to River and Waterway management that affects the regional visitor economy, including development of flood and drought mitigation and resilience strategies for the visitor economy sector and development of riverine guidelines to support decision-making on development on or near rivers	DRM RTOs	Murray Darling Basin Authority LGAs DPE	2022 to 2030
5.9	Work collaboratively with the Cross Border Commissioners Offices, RTO's, RDA and other regional stakeholders to support Cross Border Local Area Action Plans and Strategic Plans	DRM RTOs	LGAs	2022 to 2030

Paddys River Falls, Tumbarumba. Credit: Destination NSW.

Regional Priorities

Wagga Wagga Airport, Wagga Wagga. Credit: Wagga Wagga City Council and Destination Riverina Murray.

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Regional Priorities

A number of important development projects identified during the destination management planning process that help to grow the Riverina Murray Visitor Economy are explained as follows:

1. Source / develop / share relevant recruitment toolkits

The regional priority is designed to incentivise and market critical visitor economy positions needed in the region (Action 1.6) to assist with rebuilding an optimal workforce, market and development finance.

The project seeks to give DRM a role in directly helping the visitor economy operators address chronic shortages in trained and skilled workforce that is holding back growth. While a strategic response needs to be delivered by the Commonwealth and NSW State government, DRM can play a role in helping to:

- Source and market / share relevant recruitment toolkits
- Where valuable, provide capacity building to adapt the generic material into a visitor economy context, to help operators further understand and utilise the material
- Support the Destination Inspiration Program and similar related initiatives that might evolve
- Provide event growth support (eg., skills development for event coordinators and support to nosiness event pitching)
- Collect feedback from the regional visitor economy about any gaps and improvements and communicate this back to the publishers for consideration
- Encourage operators to engage with NSW First programs developed by Destination NSW

- Work with other Government and Industry stakeholders to leverage their existing recruitment platforms

2. Develop thematic interpretive content for touring routes and trails to strengthen their appeal

This regional priority seeks to add more meaning and understanding to the places and their history that trails connect visitors and related to Action 2.3. An interpretation specialist would be contracted to:

- Conduct research and consultation to identify interpretive themes and potential stories of significance and interest;
- Sort the stories into their themes and ideal locations for delivery
- Structure the stories into a logical sequence of delivery
- Develop a reverse brief and budget to deliver the stories using one or more interpretive techniques

- Develop and install the interpretation techniques

Interpretive themes could cover food production, history and bird watching. Touring and trail routes could focus on existing products such as Canola Trail, Murrumbidgee Trail, Darling River Run, Ned Kelly Touring Route, Kidman Way, Burley Griffin Way, Snowy Valleys Way, Art Deco Way and the Murray River Adventure Trail.

3. Riverina Murray Agritourism, Produce, Food and Drink Product & Experience Development Strategy

This regional priority seeks to refine a differentiated agritourism position for the region (Action 3.1) The Strategy could be developed to:

- Identify the existing lead agritourism experiences across the region
- Propose a suite of hero agritourism experiences that deliver the vision and act as a catalyst to flow on projects, providing visitors with a connection to: where food comes from and how it is grown; issues & innovation with food production, including sustainability initiatives; an empowering experience of how to choose your food
- Investigate the potential to develop a food and travel television program that showcases different experiences across the region
- Define potential partners (agricultural producers, tour operators, Charles Sturt University Ad, Env & Water Dept etc).

The Strategy would provide the direction to build and consolidate agritourism as the centrepiece product offer and regional positioning for the Riverina Murray. Delivering this positioning will allow brand marketing to clarify the market perception of the regional offer and how it is different to other regions, and worth visiting. This should then flow onto increased visitation and length of stay.

4. Conduct a visitor accommodation gap and opportunity analysis

This regional priority seeks to identify visitor accommodation needs to support overnight visitation growth (Action 5.8). The analysis could identify:

- Locations within the Riverina Murray that have the greatest potential for economic leverage resulting from additional and differentiated accommodation
- The potential for developing a suite of pop-up accommodation to support events that are located in areas with insufficient accommodation (eg., tents and toilets that are made available for rent by event promoters)
- The potential to develop a suite of eco huts or glamping tents that can be moved to different scenic / iconic locations across the region, as way of promoting nature tourism in the region, activating attractive nature-based locations, and testing the market for future more permanent offerings; and
- Potential pragmatic accommodation solutions to address the lack of housing (examples might include granny flats, tiny houses, re-purposed ex pubs, university student accommodation in term holidays, and regional hemp innovation for building materials).

The analysis extends from existing regional investment prospectus work and could incorporate a prospectus for the most strategically valuable proposals, aligned to potential government support.

5. Work with MRT (and other key stakeholders) to lobby for changes to River & Waterway management that will also assist the regional visitor economy

This regional priority seeks to enhance the sustainability of the Murray Darling Basin system of rivers and waterways which will have flow on benefits for the regional visitor economy (Action 5.13).

The project would seek to provide the voice of the visitor economy in helping river managers and decision makers understand impacts, constraints and opportunities relating to management practices such as changing water levels, erosion, water quality, unequal share of water levels.

Local Priorities

45 in-person consultation sessions were conducted across the 22 Local Government Areas and Cross Border communities in the Riverina Murray to capture local and community feedback and priorities for this DMP. Below is a list of identified future priorities for each LGA. These are a combination of private and public projects that have been identified as having the potential to have the most significant impact on the attraction of visitors to our region.

The following table outlines local priority projects for the region to 2030.

LGA	Priority Local Projects
Albury	• Implementation of Albury City Council masterplans including the Cultural Precinct Masterplan, Wonga Wetlands Masterplan, Murray River Experience Masterplan, and Albury Botanic Gardens Masterplan • Lake Hume – visitor experience development, including cruising and houseboats • Albury night time economy activation • Development of agritourism experiences, including working city farms and on-site dining • Redevelopment of major centres to attract more visitors to the region, including the Lauren Jackson Sports Centre and the Albury Entertainment Centre
Albury (cross border)	• Bonegilla Migrant Experience – Wodonga • Gateway Island Development – Wodonga • Flying Fruit Fly Circus expansion – Wodonga
Balranald	• Continued development of Yanga NP as a tourism destination • Sealing of Arumpo Road to Mungo National Park (joint project between Balranald and Wentworth to increase visitation to the region) • Euston Club Resort accommodation expansion • Development of Aboriginal Tourism via interpretation, signage, and tours
Balranald (cross border)	• Mallee Almond Blossom Festival – Robinvale • Development of Visitor experiences at Ostra Distillery - Robinvale
Berrigan	• Growth in Aviation Tourism - Adventure Flights - Flight based accommodation - aviation-themed product and marketing development. Aligned and additional to Stage 2 of Tocumwal Aviation Museum and WAAF creek Walk project • Murray River Festival of Golf (involved 3 National events and gained international coverage - promoted and growing the brand of golf right along the Murray River) • Bullanginya Arts Walk (Cobram Barooga, consolidating and redevelopment of Existing Nature Based Attractions - Bullanginya Arts Walk)
Berrigan (cross-border)	• Kennedy Park & Thompsons Beach development – Cobram/Moira
Bland	• Lake Cowal (environmental education, Wiradjuri cultural heritage, nature-based and ecotourism) and other water-themed development including water parks and mineral springs • Identification of opportunities related to short-term and long-term accommodation related to major projects and mining
Carrathool	• Hillston Arid Zone Botanic Garden, river access and other nature-themed product development

Local Priorities (continued)

LGA	Priority Local Projects
Coolamon	• Further development of existing product incl: Coolamon Cheese developments, Coolamon Hotel redevelopment, Brushwood farm tours • Growth and establishment of new visitor attracting events such as Yield Festival and Canola Festival • Continue development and growth of touring trails and experiences between neighbouring towns and shires, including the Canola Trail
Cootamundra - Gundagai	• Redevelopment of heritage tourism offerings such as The Dog on the Tuckerbox, Old Gundagai Mill, Prince Alfred Bridge memorialisation • Development of agritourism product – on-farm accommodation, dining and experiences • Trail development – Rail Trail, Mountain bike trails, cycling trails
Edward River	• Implementation of Peppin Heritage Centre Masterplan (new and enhanced displays, new accessible multi-media exhibitions, improved accessibility) • Development of agritourism experiences • Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre (tours through the Island Sanctuary to share info about traditional plants)
Federation	• Murray Valley National Park and Murray River - Visitor experience development, including a Cultural Walk • Urana Lake Master Plan development • Corowa Eco Tourist Resort • Corowa Whisky (Business Event Development and Visitor Experience enhancement)
Federation (Cross Border)	• Yarrawonga Airport upgrade – Moira • Rutherglen Winery Experiences - Indigo
Greater Hume	• Development of visitor experiences at Woomargama National Park, including Hanel's Lookout, indigenous product and interpretation and wildflower tours • Hume and Hovell Track development (development and connection to Murray River Adventure Trails) • Greater Hume Museum Trail and Reinvestment (implement strategy actions to invest in visitor experiences of the 11 museums across the region and development of touring route to link experiences) • Development of water-based tourism experiences on Lake Hume, Billabong Creek, Gum Swamp and Doodle Comer Swamp
Griffith	• Development of high quality culinary, winery and agritourism experiences including on-farm accommodation • Continued development of sporting, cultural and business events and increased supporting accommodation • To develop outdoor, nature based visitor experiences, particularly walking and cycle tracks around the city and surrounds • To develop a safer and more inviting visitor experience at Lake Wyangan and the Hermit's Caves & Hermit's Caves Lookout precinct

Local Priorities (continued)

LGA	Priority Local Projects
Hay	• Development of tourism precincts including a family hub, history hub and nature/outdoor hub as identified in the Hay DMP • Continued development of visitor attracting events including the Rainbow on the Plains Festival • Indigenous tourism within the Gayini region and surrounds
Junee	• Further development of existing tourism offerings including Junee Licorice Factory, Junee Hotel and Railway heritage experiences • Continued development of experiences between areas of interest within the shire and neighbouring towns including touring routes and trails • Development and implementation of master plan for Bethungra Dam Reserve, Sandy Beach and a Cultural and Visitor Information Centre • Development of agritourism experiences within the Junee Shire • Further development of the Atheneum Theatre for events and the Canola Festival
Leeton	• Redevelopment and enhancement of nature-based tourism product such as the Gogeldrie Riverside Precinct development, Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands and increased access to Murrumbidgee National Park (NPWS) • Continued development of high quality agritourism experiences including accommodation, dining and experiences e.g. Whitton Malthouse, Murray Cod Australia • Continued development of Art Deco place-making and branding related to building restoration (i.e., Leeton Museum and Gallery), events (i.e., annual Australian Art Deco Festival Leeton) and themed touring routes (i.e., Art Deco Way Leeton and Murrumbidgee Trails)
Lockhart	• Strategic development of tourism product at The Rock Nature Reserve / Kengal Aboriginal Place and surrounds – this includes nature walks, Indigenous experiences, observatory experiences and events • Development of a major visitor-attracting infrastructure development within the Lockhart Shire Region • Development and implementation of Lockhart CBD, Brookong Creek and Galore Hill Scenic Reserve Masterplans • Development of agritourism, nature and cultural experiences, trails and events
Murray River	• Moama Bowling Club Resort Development • Timbercutter expansion and eco-accommodation • Bridge Arts Project • Meninya Street Masterplan Implementation Project • Moama Lights event expansion • Continued Development of the Moulamein Heritage Precinct • Riverside accommodation development in Barham • Rich River Golf Club motel redevelopment

Local Priorities (continued)

LGA	Priority Local Projects
Murray River (Cross-Border)	• Barmah Forest National Parks Experience – Moira • Australian Star Paddlesteamer – Campaspe • Echuca Airport Redevelopment – Campaspe • Echuca Visitor Events Precinct Plan - Campaspe • Gunbower Tourism Investment Masterplan - Gannawarra • Koondrook Butter Factory Arts Precinct and Murray River Brewery - Gannawarra • Pental Island Wildlife Reserve – Swan Hill • Lake Tyrell Visitor Dispersal Project – Swan Hill
Murrumbidgee	• Nature and outdoor product development including Altina Wildlife Park improvements • Darlington Point Riverside Caravan Park redevelopment and a targeted increase in short and long-term accommodation options for visitors, including for events
Narrandera	• Development of products and experiences related to the koala population in the Narrandera region, as well as enhanced Indigenous cultural tourism experiences • Further development of visitor attracting events including the Narrungdera Earth Fest Indigenous Festival
Snowy Valleys	• Development of the Hume & Hovell Track (for inclusion in the Great Walks of Australia collective) • Sealing of Brindabella Rd between Tumut and the ACT border • Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct redevelopment (NPWS) • Further development of the Snowy Valleys Sculpture Trail • Development of the Apple Thief Cider House (Batlow) and linked visitor experiences in the Batlow region • Delivery of major projects identified in the Snowy Valleys Tracks & Trails Masterplan • Growth and Development of the Snowy Valleys Winter Festivals Season • Development of professional mountain bike trails in Tumbarumba, Talbingo and elsewhere in the Snowy Valleys
Temora	• Temora Railway Precinct development including Pardey & Co Flour Mill and Railway Station and historic hotel redevelopments • Construction of the NSW Ambulance Museum as a state-significant museum • Continued development of touring routes and trails, and associated experiences between neighbouring towns and shire, including the Canola Trail • Continued expansion of events including the Temora Aviation Museum and Lake Centenary events

Local Priorities (continued)

LGA	Priority Local Projects
Wagga Wagga	• Implementation of Wagga Wagga City Council Strategic and Master Plans including but not limited to the Cultural Plan 2030, Events Strategy and Wiradjuri Trail Masterplan • Development and growth of major events and festivals. Including attracting and hosting state/ nationally significant sporting events, arts and cultural tours and festivals • Development of high-quality culinary and agritourism experiences in Wagga Wagga and surrounds • Develop infrastructure to support connectivity and economic growth, including the Wagga Wagga Airport upgrade, electric vehicle (EV) charging investment, and attraction and investment for short-term and long-term accommodation. • Continued development of Wiradjuri and First Nations visitor experiences, including immersive, educational and engaging Cultural experiences, cultural tours and experiences along the Wiradjuri Trail
Wentworth	• Wentworth Eco Resort Development (Trentham Waters) • Light/State (Bruce Munro Light Installation, a joint project with Mildura) • Criterium/HPV track development and programming • Willandra Lakes and Mungo National Park - development of a visitor-related strategic plan • Remarketing of the Murray Darling wine destination as a premium wine region
Wentworth (Cross Border)	• Interstate Rail Connectivity project – Mildura • Houseboat & River Cruise development – Mildura

Table 8. Priority projects by Local Government Area

Local destination priorities are outlined in Appendix 7.

Perry Sandhills, Wentworth. Credit: Destination NSW.

Stakeholder Roles in Growing the Regional NSW Visitor Economy

Junee Licorice and Chocolate Factory, Junee. Credit: Destination NSW.

Stakeholder Roles in Growing the Regional NSW Visitor Economy

The Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan will guide the region's priorities to 2030 and will require cooperative support from other visitor economy stakeholders across local, regional and state/territory levels to successfully implement the Plans' initiatives.

Stakeholder engagement confirmed a commitment from local governments, tourism businesses, Destination Riverina Murray and Destination NSW to develop a solid working relationship to achieve the outcomes prioritised in this Plan.

The following outlines the roles of these stakeholders in implementing this plan to 2030.

Destination Riverina Murray

Destination Riverina Murray is one of seven Destination Networks in regional NSW and is an important conduit between the NSW Government, the local governments and visitor economy businesses across the Riverina Murray region. It continues to play an important role in delivering regional funding and industry development programs, and in identifying infrastructure needs and investment opportunities to grow the regional visitor economy.

The NSW Destination Networks are considered the champions of the visitor economy in their regions, proactively engaging with stakeholders to identify, prioritise and facilitate opportunities for regional visitor economy growth. They also play a key support role for Destination NSW in the delivery of its industry development and visitor experience and regional event funding programs.

The Destination Networks will support Destination NSW in implementing the VES 2030 to achieve the visitation and expenditure targets for regional NSW. The Destination Management Plan for each Destination Network is aligned with the VES 2030.

The Destination Networks are predominantly destination managers and are considered the 'shopfront' for Destination NSW in regional NSW and work closely with local government, tourism organisations and operators[8].

Their objective is to facilitate visitor economy growth at the local level, through representing and coordinating the region's tourism industry.

Their core responsibilities include:

- Industry Engagement and Industry Development
- Product Development
- Training and Education
- Preliminary Review of Local DNSW Grant Applications to ensure quality/compliance with guidelines
- Collaboration with DNSW on cooperative marketing and industry activities that are aligned to Brand NSW

Specifically, Destination Networks:

- **Develop and implement the region's Destination Management Plan and Business Plan**, in alignment with the VES 2030, and ensure alignment with local tourism and related plans
- **Work with Local Government and industry** on product development, including investment attraction
- **Work in collaboration with DNSW** led marketing and communications activity for their 'hero' destinations, experiences, events and festivals and regional campaigns
- **Explore Industry Development initiatives** (i.e., identify opportunities for growth) eg., Conferencing, Field Study Tours, local industry education and training needs especially for small to medium sized tourism operators
- **Assist local industry to prepare DNSW grant applications**[9].

The Destination Networks are funded by Destination NSW with an independent skills-based board providing strategic leadership and direction.

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8 VES 2030

9 Destination Networks: Driving Growth of the Visitor Economy in Regional NSW https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Destination-Networks-29-June-2017.pdf

Destination NSW

As the lead NSW Government agency for the visitor economy, Destination NSW will coordinate and amplify delivery of the programs and initiatives of the VES 2030 across all levels of Government.

A whole-of-government approach has been embedded in visitor economy planning with the establishment of a new Visitor Economy Senior Officers Group, to ensure visitor economy strategies are coordinated across government, to monitor performance against targets, and respond to emerging issues.

New approaches to industry engagement and consultation are also proposed to inform the development of new NSW Government initiatives and programs for the visitor economy. The NSW Government will continue to develop the Visitor Economy Index to explore new ways of measuring the impact of the visitor economy and guide future decision-making.

Destination NSW support the Destination Networks to deliver the strategic directions of the DMPs and grow the visitor economy.

Department of Regional NSW

DRNSW is the NSW Government's central agency for regional issues, building resilient regional economies and communities, strengthening primary industries, managing the use of our valuable regional land, overseeing the state's mineral and mining resources and ensuring that government investment into regional NSW is fair and delivers positive outcomes for local communities and businesses[10].

The NSW Government's 'Regional Development Framework' and '20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW – Refresh' set out the Government's priorities and plans to achieve long-term social and economic success for regional communities across the state. In addition, Regional Economic Development Strategies provide a clear economic development strategy for the regions and guide government investment in economic development initiatives in regional NSW.

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10 www.regional.nsw.gov.au

Lake Mulwala, Mulwala. Credit: Destination NSW.
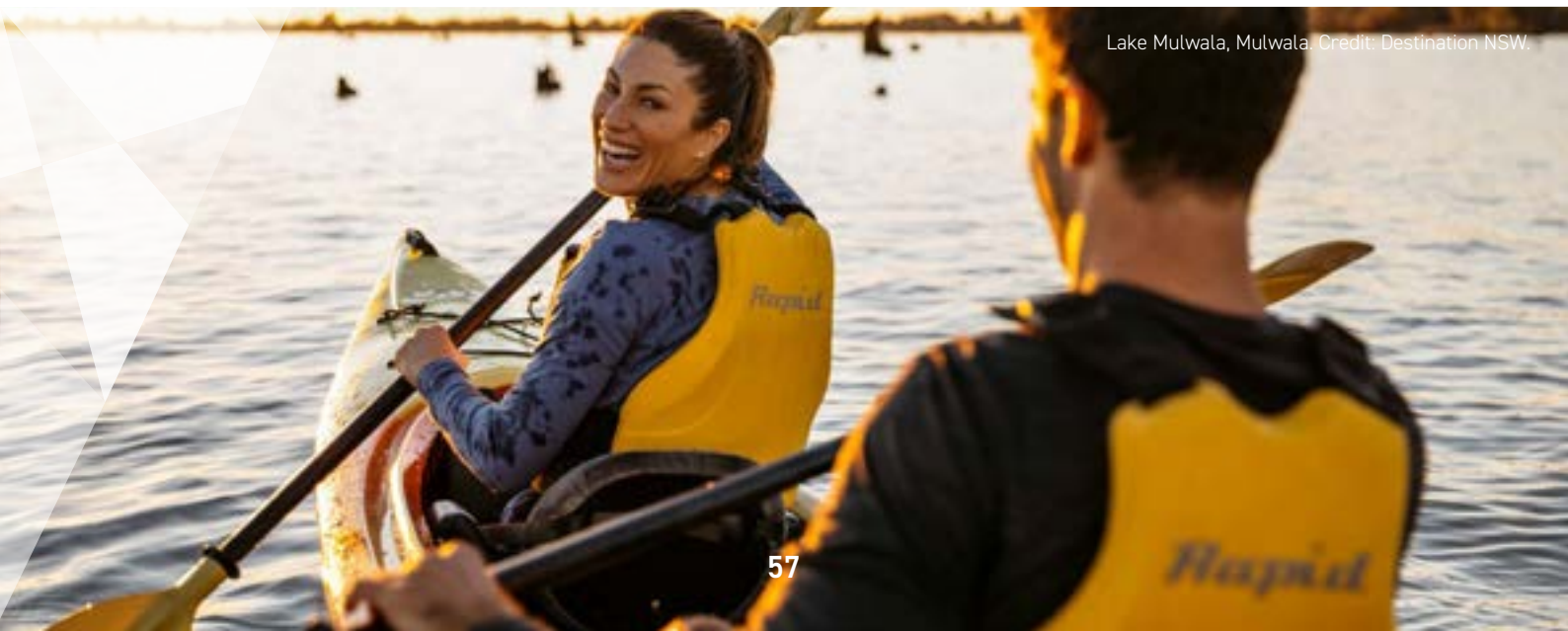
Local Government

Local Government plays a pivotal role in tourism activity, with councils actively involved in promoting tourism, providing infrastructure and services to support tourism, and managing the impacts of tourism. The Australian Regional Tourism and Economic Development Australia benchmarking survey of local governments (2020) shows that each council spends on average $761,000 on tourism annually. Whether it's through the provision of infrastructure, cultural facilities, events, visitor services or public spaces, councils support the economic development of their local communities via either direct financial or in-kind support to tourism. The role of local government in tourism is also recognised in the state government's VES 2030, which contains a commitment for Destination NSW to work closely with councils and a principle of collaboration between the industry and government, including councils[11].

Other Key Support Partners

Other important local, regional and NSW government and industry stakeholders that have an important role in supporting the DNs to implement strategies and actions of their associated with this Plan to 2030 include:

- Local tourism organisations and Chambers of Commerce
- Tourism industry operators
- Region Joint Organisations
- Regional Tourism Organisations
- NSW Government Departments and Agencies (represented by the DNSW Visitor Economy Seniors Officers Group)
- NSW Tourism Industry Associations

11 https://lgnsw.org.au/Public/Public/Policy/Tourism.aspx

Review

Monitoring of the implementation of this Plan's strategies and actions is important to ensure its vision and objectives are achieved and to provide new information that can be used to inform planning and decision-making for the Riverina Murray visitor economy to 2030. A review of this plan will be undertaken in 2024 and 2026.

Visitor Infrastructure Framework Assessment Criteria

The NSW Government uses Cost Benefit Analysis to assess the social, economic and environmental impacts of infrastructure proposals including visitor economy infrastructure. Where feasible, Cost Benefit Analysis will be used to prioritise proposals for regional NSW visitor economies and have been designed to help guide prioritisation and decision-making. See Appendix 8 for the criteria used by the NSW Government to analyse the cost benefit of infrastructure development proposals.

Food I Am, Wagga Wagga. Credit: Destination NSW.

Appendices

Appendix 1: NSW Government strategies relevant to the regional visitor economy

STATEWIDE STRATEGIES

- NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030
- NSW 2040 Economic Blueprint
- Global NSW Strategy
- 24-Hour Economy Strategy 2020
- Staying Ahead: State Infrastructure 2022 to 2042
- Future Transport Strategy 2056
- Tourism & Transport Plan: Future Transport Strategy 2056
- Smart Places Strategy
- Study NSW International Education Strategy

REGIONAL STRATEGIES

- 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW 2021
- Making It Happen in the Regions: Regional Development Framework
- Future Ready Regions 2021
- Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan
- Regional Economic Development Strategies 2018 to 2022 (and updates)
- Department Planning Industry Environment - Regional Plans

RELEVANT VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGIES

- Crown Lands 2031
- NPWS Visitor Infrastructure Program
- NSW Forestry Corporation - Recreation & Tourism Policy 2018
- NSW Marine Estates - Mainland Marine Park Network - Draft Management Plan 2021 to 2031
- Port Authority of NSW - Vision & Strategic Plan 2020 to 2025
- Create NSW - Arts & Cultural Policy Framework
- Heritage NSW - Heritage Act Review 2021
- Invest NSW - Independent Brewers Action Plan 2020
- Planning NSW - STRA Policy 2021 & Planning amendments for agritourism

Figure 8. Strategies relevant to the regional visitor economy

Appendix 2: Local Destination Management Plan Priorities

LGA DMP	PRODUCT FOCUS	CURRENT MARKETS	TARGET MARKETS
Albury Wodonga Destination Management Plan 2019	• Diversify accommodation • Food and wine • Nature and adventure • Arts, culture & heritage • Sport events	**Roy Morgan Helix Personas:** • Enjoy with Ease • Love the Outdoors • Show me, teach me, connect me • Home Away from Home • Business Tourism	(Same as current markets) **Roy Morgan Helix Personas:** • Enjoy with Ease • Love the Outdoors • Show me, teach me, connect me • Home Away from Home, and • Business Tourism
Edward River Tourism Development Plan 2020	• River and water sports • Nature • Events • Heritage & Culture • Country life	• Families • Grey Nomads • VFR and locals exploring region (34%) • Millennials (28%) • Business (19%)	• Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) (currently 34% of overnight visitors to Edward River region) • Business (19% of overnight visitors to Edward River region) • Families with young children (20% of visitors to Riverina Murray)
Griffith Destination Tourism Plan 2021-2024	• Leisure accommodation & accommodation for large events • Food and wine • Series of small events • Drive itineraries	• **Primary:** Business, VFR, Grey Nomads, Families, Day trippers • **Secondary**: Families, Millennials	• **Primary:** Business, VFR, Grey Nomads, day trippers • **Secondary:** Families, Millennials, International Backpackers
Hay Destination Management Plan 2021	• Active family nature tourism • Enlivened history and heritage • Nature and outdoor recreation (bird watching, cycling, kayaking and fishing) & Indigenous • Diversify accommodation offering	**Roy Morgan Helix Personas:** • Hearth and Home • Fair Go. • To a much lesser degree, Leading Lifestyle and Doing Fine	**Helix Personas:** • Leading Lifestyle • Visiting Friends and Relatives
Snowy Valleys Destination Management Plan 2018	• Nature tourism • Cycling • Food and agritourism • Heritage and culture	• Above average proportion under 25 years, from outside NSW, travel as a group • Below average proportion eat out or shopping • Most popular activities: sightseeing, visiting friends and relatives, visiting national / state parks, bushwalking, fishing • Above average for Riverina Murray proportion of international, the largest proportion are 25 – 35 years, come from UK, below average visiting wineries	• **Existing core markets:** Visiting Friends and Relatives, Grey Nomads, Families, Business, Working Holiday Makers, Educational tourism, Events and Festivals • **Potential new target markets:** International Experience Seekers, Millennials / Young Travellers

Table 9. Local DMP priorities

Appendix 3: Summary of directions from LGA Plans for areas without a DMP

LGA PLAN	PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE
Balranald Economic Development Strategy 2012	• Named tourism assets, prioritised tourism as the number 1 priority, but no strategic directions
Berrigan Tourism Strategy 2019 - 2023	• Events, Tocumwal Aerodrome, Accommodation, Murray River Trail
Cootamundra-Gundagai Agritourism development	• Farmstays, Dining, Local produce, Events, Sustainable carbon farming tours, Horse riding and handling
Edward River Economic Development Strategy	• Develop agritourism / agri-culinary cluster • Develop arts and cultural assets with contemporary perspectives • Develop more events
Federation Council Economic Development Strategy 2021	• Unlock tourism potential of key natural assets - rivers, lakes and waterways • Capitalise on events market: leisure, business, weddings, sport • Promote diversity in eco-tourism and agritourism products
Leeton Economic Development, Tourism and Events Strategic Plan	• Develop new ecotourism and agritourism product, upgrade the Roxy Community Theatre • Review and support local events to become more sustainable and accountable
Lockhart Tourism and Economic Development Strategy 2016	• Develop nature tourism, ecotourism and rural tourism
Murrumbidgee Council Economic Development Strategy 2019	• Develop agritourism, nature tourism, arts and culture, touring routes, food and beverage • Events development
Narrandera Business Recovery Strategy 2017	• Develop nature tourism, culinary and agritourism
Narrandera Economic Development Strategy 2017	• Lake Talbot water park redevelopment, Narrandera Destination and Discovery Hub, caravan park improvements

Table 10. Strategic direction for LGAs without a DMP

Appendix 4: Alignment to Community Strategic Plans

ALBURY 2050

Objective: Albury will offer diverse and innovative tourism experiences to attract new and repeat visitation (p. 22).
- Communicate the story of Albury through our tourism offerings, providing an authentic and engaging visitor experience
- Create tourism marketing campaigns to promote experiences linked to our brand pillars
- Investigate partnerships to attract visitors to our region, and increase the diversity in attractions, events and facilities for our community and visitors.

BALRANALD 2032

Objective: Increase Tourism and visitation to the area
- Prepare and implement a local tourism and marketing strategy
- Maximise tourism to Mungo National Park
- Seek partners and funding to promote the area
- Improve signage and town entrances for visitors
- Identify and promote local heritage.

BERRIGAN 2032

Diversify and promote local tourism (p. 21)
- Implement the Berrigan Shire Tourism Strategy
- Partner with regional Tourism Boards (Murray Regional Tourism Board or similar)

BLAND 2032

Objective: Work with the tourism industry to identify and develop products and services that appeal to visitors of the Shire
- Maintain relationships with tourism and community groups to progress tourism initiatives within the Bland Shire
- Maintain an active participation and representation in relevant regional tourism meetings and events
- Promote Bland Shire using online and print mediums
- Monitor, update and apply tourism signage as requested by tourism attractions and tourism businesses
- Work with neighbouring Shires to promote tourism experiences and Tourism Art Trail
- Provide and maintain a quality Visitors Information Centre which engages and supports tourism in the Bland Shire.

Objective: Attract a diverse range of Visitors to the Shire
- Investigate technology and or tourism initiatives/attractions to improve the visitor experience within Bland Shire.

CARRATHOOL 2030

Objective: Community infrastructure that is accessible for everyone
- Invest in enhancements for Council managed caravan parks to promote increased tourism opportunities (p. 23)

Objective: Establish Carrathool Shire as a welcoming and exciting place for community and visitors
- Market Carrathool Shire to potential visitors as a tourism destination (p. 24)

Objective: Provide a safe environment for local fauna and fauna
- Promote the protection of local native birds and capitalize on this in other areas such as tourism (p. 25).

COOLAMON 2040

Objective: Active promotion of the visitor economy and what the shire has to offer (p. 26).
- Actively participate in regional visitor economy planning and promotion including promoting the "Visit Coolamon Shire"
- Advocate for and expand infrastructure to support visitors such as town parks and accommodation
- Provide leadership to tourism businesses through advocacy, marketing, and information provision
- Attract more tourism operators and entertainment to the area, offering a diverse range of products and experiences that support and enhance our visitor economy.

COOTAMUNDRA-GUNDAGAI 2032

Objective: Recognised as a must-visit destination
- Seek funding and investment opportunities for tourism asset development
- Seek funding and investment opportunities to improve existing visitor amenities and experiences
- Growth and expansion of the region's events calendar and tourism products with a focus on agritourism opportunities
- Increased marketing of the Cootamundra and Gundagai tourism brands
- Actively promote and develop the regions visitor accommodation, products, and recreational infrastructure
- Establish stand-alone Visitor Information Centres.

EDWARD RIVER 2050

- Develop our key assets to enhance agriculture, boost tourism and support existing business

FEDERATION 2032

Increase tourism:
- Investigating opportunities to increase tourism growth sector accommodation
- Investigating opportunities to further develop and market the area's natural and heritage attractions
- Investigating opportunities for events-based tourism
- Collaborative approach to regional marketing
- Ensure a strategic focus on tourism

GREATER HUME 2032

Objective: Our region's highlights are celebrated, maintained and promoted to enhance our visitor experience
- Enliven community life by delivering and supporting events, public art, cultural celebrations and entertainment
- Promote the diversity and quality of retail offerings and local products.
- Council's promotion of economic development
- Council's promotion of tourism and development of a quality visitor experience
- Offer a good mix of entertainment options

GRIFFITH 2032

- Objective: Promote Griffith as a desirable visitor destination
- Objective: Provide a range of cultural facilities, programs and events

HAY 2027

Priority: Continue tourism growth initiatives
- Our community values its history and tourism
  - » Actively identify promote and enhance tourism initiatives
  - » Promote camping facilities
  - » Showcase our open space, recreation and cultural facilities
- We have the capacity to hold numerous events and activities
  - » Promote events and activities
  - » Promote our capacity to stage events

JUNEE 2035

Strategy: Grow our tourism sector
- Council role to facilitate a tourism network group
- Community role to participate in tourism events (p. 14)

LEETON 2035

Outcome: We are a popular tourism destination (p. 57)
- Indicator: Airline passengers to Sydney. The aim is to increase the number of airline travellers to and from Sydney
- Indicator: Visitor numbers – Fivebough Wetlands The aim is to increase the number of visitors to the wetlands. The two graphs at the bottom of the second column on page 71 show current trends in airline passenger numbers and visitors to Fivebough Wetlands.
  - » Promote our towns, villages and attractions
  - » Provide a range of accommodation options to visitors
  - » Host events, festivals and activities that attract visitors to the shire

LOCKHART 2032

Objective: Our community has a strong tourism sector
- Create a thriving tourism economy in Lockhart Shire

MURRAY RIVER 2032

Goal: Promote and grow tourism across the region
- 5.8 Promotion of local attractions, to be achieved through yearly events strategy and marketing and promotions plan developed
- 5.10 Growing tourism across the LGA, to be achieved through development of a tourism strategy

MURRUMBIDGEE 2032

Objective: Providing the Community with open space to be active
- Develop riverside locations for the enjoyment of all and to promote tourism

Objective: Promoting a Regional Economy and Growth
- Contribute to regional tourism initiatives and major events in the region

Objective: Promoting Tourism Strategies and Opportunities
- Provide professional information services promoting tourism, visitor ventures, and activities in our towns
- Provide promotion and resources for tourism service providers
- Provide promotion and support for major events within our Destination Management Plan
- Develop and implement a Murrumbidgee tourism strategic plan aligned with regional, state, and federal priorities including outcomes of relevant evaluation reports and reviews
- Encourage opportunities for further recreation activities on or around the rivers and lakes

NARRANDERA 2034

- 3.1.3 Promotion of Narrandera Shire using our heritage buildings, culture, location, waterways, ecotourism also business and sporting facilities (p. 23)

SNOWY VALLEYS 2042

- Arts and cultural activities thrive in our region
- Sustainable tourism initiatives contribute to a thriving economy
- The recreation and sustainable tourism opportunities provided by our natural environment is preserved for future generations.

TEMORA 2035

Objective 3.7: A community that benefits from tourism (p. 30)
- 3.7.1 Provide visitor facilities, services, activities and events that cater for a broad range of visitors
- 3.7.2 Promote Temora Shire's unique tourist offerings as part of the Riverina visitor destination
- 3.7.3 Showcase Temora's rich history to entice visitors to our Shire

WAGGA WAGGA 2032

Objective: Wagga Wagga is an attractive tourism destination
- Facilitate planning and development of visitor-related facilities and services
- Accommodate and provide support to visitors
- Provide a variety of events, festivals, and activities

WENTWORTH 2027

Objective: Promote the Wentworth Region as a desirable visitor and tourism destination
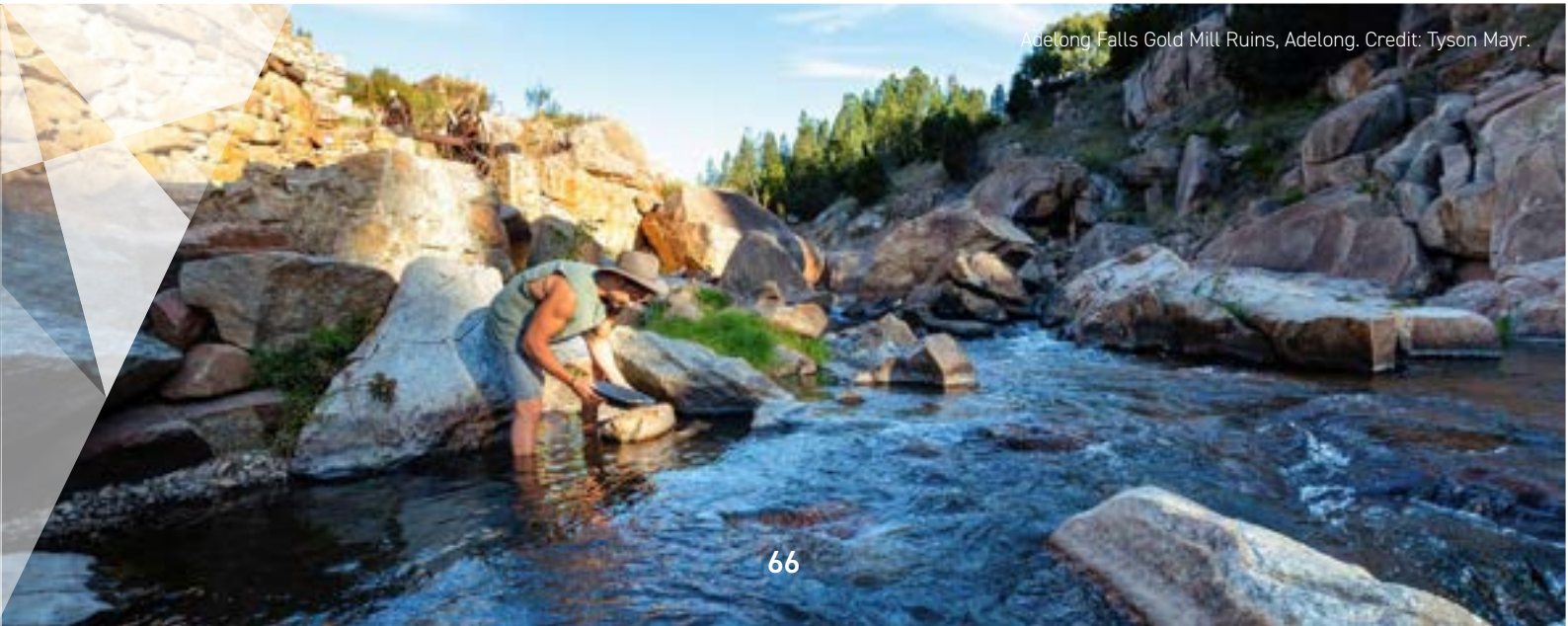
Adelong Falls Gold Mill Ruins, Adelong. Credit: Tyson Mayr.

Darling River Run. Credit: Destination NSW.

Appendix 5: Positioning (brand pyramid) for Murray River Tourism

The pyramid (top to bottom) reads:

- **Alive with Legendary River Stories**
- **Full of Life, Generous, Genuine**
- **Respect for nature & the outdoors, Giving**
- **Re-Energised, Refreshed, Connected**
- ***Participate & Share*** in a choice of year-round outdoor experiences & events

  Connection to Australia's iconic river & abundance of experiences (via above plus stories of the river, region & people)
- **1. The Majestic Murray River & waterways:** beauty & expansiveness of river & river setting. **2. Range of accessible outdoor recreational activities:** boating, fishing, water skiing, kayaking, golfing, cycling, walking. **3. Iconic river experiences:** houseboats & paddle steamers. **4. Sunny & temperate climate:** warm, stable weather condition, year-round. **5. Living history:** pioneer heritage stories. 6. Golf experiences, ideal climate, relaxed, scenic & accessible course close to the river. **7. Natural landscapes:** iconic River Red Gum bushland, wetlands, Mungo National Park. **8. Diverse calendar of authentic events:** Massive Murray Paddle, Riverboats Music Festival, Southern 80, Deniliquin Ute Muster.

Figure 9. Murray River Tourism brand pyramid (2013-2017 MRT Strategic Marketing Plan)

Lachlan Street, Hay. Hay Shire Council.

Appendix 6: Visitation Analysis

Reliance on key purposes of the visit of domestic overnight visitors by state/region/SA2 (2015-19 annual average data)

Measure	Region/SA2	Holiday ('000)	VFR ('000)	Business ('000)	Share of Holiday in Total
Nights	Murray East	87	271	96	18%
	Central Murray	1,456	646	206	61%
	Mallee	977	734	366	44%
	The Murray	1,357	1,085	488	44%
	Murray MRT (Vic + NSW)	3,877	2,737	1,156	48%
	Riverina	690	1,118	777	24%
	Sum of Murray MRT + Riverina DRM	**4,567**	**3,855**	**1,933**	**42%**
Overnight trips	Murray East	42	103	32	22%
	Central Murray	454	267	74	55%
	Mallee	326	227	162	42%
	The Murray	478	383	204	41%
	Murray MRT (Vic + NSW)	1,300	979	471	44%
	Riverina	311	397	283	28%
	Sum of Murray MRT + Riverina DRM	**1,611**	**1,376**	**754**	**40%**

Table 11. Pre-COVID period (2015 to 2019) reliance on key purposes of the visit of domestic overnight visitors in Murray and Riverina regions (nights and trips)

Change in 2015-19 annual average compared to 2005-09 annual average

Measure	Region/SA2	Holiday	VFR	Business	Total %
Nights	Murray East	-2%	60%	133%	49%
	Central Murray	2%	18%	81%	11%
	Mallee	-3%	15%	54%	12%
	The Murray	-14%	21%	28%	3%
	Murray MRT (Vic + NSW)	-6%	22%	50%	10%
	Riverina	36%	14%	81%	34%
	Sum of Murray MRT + Riverina DRM	**-1%**	**19%**	**61%**	**15%**
Overnight trips	Murray East	34%	81%	35%	52%
	Central Murray	0%	27%	52%	12%
	Mallee	10%	12%	62%	23%
	The Murray	5%	24%	34%	18%
	Murray MRT (Vic + NSW)	5%	26%	46%	19%
	Riverina	31%	20%	68%	39%
	Sum of Murray MRT + Riverina DRM	**9%**	**24%**	**53%**	**24%**

Table 12. Pre-COVID (2015 to 2019) longer-term growth in Murray and Riverina regions domestic overnight visitation (nights and trips)

Share of domestic holiday visitor nights on trips with only one overnight stopover

Destination	Share of domestic holiday visitor nights one night stopover (%)
Echuca	84%
Yarrawonga	79%
Wagga Wagga and surrounding area	64%
Albury-Wodonga	61%
Swan Hill	61%
Mildura	57%
Griffith and surrounding area	55%
Gundagai	46%
Hay	35%

Table 13. Share of domestic holiday visitor nights in key Riverina and Murray MRT regions over 2015-19 by visitors with only one overnight stopover on their trip

Appendix 7: Local Destination Priorities

Albury

Description of the area

Albury, together with the neighbouring Victorian city of Wodonga, functions as a single economic centre, with employment, investment and services accessed across both locations. With a population of 56,093 in 2021, Albury services an extensive catchment of approximately 200,000 people. It provides higher-order services, including for business, office and retail uses, and arts, culture, recreation, and entertainment, which support the needs of smaller settlements across the region and in cross-border communities. Albury is home to NSW's fifth busiest commercial airport servicing over 250,000 passengers annually. Albury-Wodonga is the primary cross-border point between NSW and Victoria and a major connection point between Sydney & Melbourne.

The following are recognised by DRM as regionally significant experiences:
- » Murray Art Museum Albury (MAMA)
- » Write Around the Murray (event)
- » Circa 1928
- » Wagirra Trail and Yindyamarra Sculpture Walk
- » Wonga Wetlands
- » Canvas Eatery
- » Albury Gold Cup Carnival (event)
- » Lake Hume
- » Murray River Experience (incl. Noreuil Park, and riverside precinct)
- » The River Deck
- » Harris Farm Markets
- » Yardbird
- » Lavington Sports Ground
- » Albury Botanic Gardens
- » Albury Railway Station and Historic building

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Implementation of Albury City Council masterplans including the Cultural Precinct Masterplan, Wonga Wetlands Masterplan, Murray River Experience Masterplan, and Albury Botanic Gardens Masterplan.
- Lake Hume – visitor experience development – and cruising and houseboats
- Agritourism, working small farm, on-site dining
- Albury night time economy activation
- Redevelopment of major centres to attract more visitors to the region, including the Lauren Jackson Sports Centre and the Albury Entertainment Centre

Cross Border Priorities
- Bonegilla Migrant Experience – Wodonga
- Gateway Island Development – Wodonga
- Flying Fruit Fly Circus expansion – Wodonga

Balranald

Description of the area

Balranald Shire is located on the Sturt Highway and includes the townships of Balranald and Euston, as well as the outback town of Penarie. The Shire has an area of 21,693km2 and a population in 2021 of 2,208 people.

The area supports irrigated agriculture linked to the Murray and Darling rivers, including horticultural and viticultural industries such as grapes, citrus and nuts, as well as broadacre cropping, meat and wool production, and organic farming. There is an emerging mineral sands mining industry.

Balranald is the primary gateway to Mungo National Park.

Balranald (continued)

Some of the key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:
- » Balranald Discovery Centre
- » The Old Gaol
- » Balranald Art Gallery
- » Swing Bridge and Nature Walk
- » Heritage Trail, Funky Frog Trail
- » 5 Rivers Outback Festival (event)
- » Mungo National Park
- » Yanga National Park, Historic Shearing Shed and Homestead
- » Outback Pubs (Homebush Hotel, Kyalite Hotel)
- » Euston Club Resort
- » The Great Murray River Salami Festival (event)

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Continued development of Yanga NP as a tourism destination
- Sealing of Arumpo Road to Mungo National Park (joint project between Balranald and Wentworth to increase visitation to the region, especially among drivers not keen on an unsealed road
- Development of Aboriginal Tourism via interpretation, signage, and tours
- Euston Club Resort accommodation expansion

Cross Border Priorities
- Mallee Almond Blossom Festival – Robinvale
- Ostra Distillery Visitor Experiences - Robinvale

Berrigan

Description of the area

Berrigan Shire is located in the south of the region, midway between Albury and Echuca. The shire had a population of 8,665 in 2021.

Less than 300 kilometres from Melbourne, the towns of Barooga, Berrigan, Finley and Tocumwal offer a range of recreation and sporting facilities. Lifestyle activities and opportunities in towns adjoining the Murray River have promoted continued population growth.

Some of the key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:

- » Tocumwal Historic Aerodrome / Aviation Museum
- » Barooga & Tocumwal Golf Clubs and sporting facilities
- » Museums in Berrigan, Finley and Tocumwal
- » Strawberry Fields and Good Times Festivals
- » Finley Rodeo and Annual Tractor Pull (event)
- » Cobba Paddleboat & Thompsons Beach

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Growth in Aviation Tourism - Adventure Flights - Flight based accommodation - aviation-themed product and marketing development. Aligned and additional to Stage 2 of Tocumwal Aviation Museum and WAAF creek Walk project
- Murray River Festival of Golf (involved 3 National events and gained international coverage - promoted and grew the brand of golf right along the Murray River)
- Bullanginya Arts Walk (Cobram Barooga, consolidating and redevelopment of Existing Nature Based Attractions - Bullanginya Arts Walk)

Cross Border Priorities
- Kennedy Park & Thompsons Beach development – Cobram/Moira

Bland

Description of the area

Bland Shire is located in the north of the region, at the junction of the Newell and Mid Western highways and Goldfields Way. The shire had a population of 5,547 in 2021.

The economy is underpinned by agriculture and mining, with the region's most significant mining activity occurring at Lake Cowal Gold Mine.

The shire includes the local centre of West Wyalong, as well as a number of smaller towns and villages, including Wyalong, Barmedman, Tallimba, Ungarie, Weethalle and Mirrool.

Some of the key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:

- Bland Shire Art Trail
- Weethalle Silo Art Project
- Various heritage walks (Wyalong, West Wyalong and Ungarie)
- Lake Cowal
- Splatter Art Gallery
- Exclusive Hot Glass Gallery
- Barmedman Mineral Pool

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Product Development – Lake Cowal (environmental education, Wiradjuri cultural heritage, nature-based and ecotourism) and other water-themed development including water parks and mineral springs
- Accommodation development – identification of opportunities related to short-term and long-term accommodation related to major projects and mining

Carrathool

Description of the area

Carrathool Shire, situated in the far north-west of the region, encompasses predominately rural land. The shire had a population of 2,866 in 2021. Carrathool is the LGA in NSW with the highest gross value for agricultural commodities. The shire includes the local centre of Hillston and the surrounding villages of Goolgowi, Merriwagga, Rankins Springs and Carrathool.

Some of the key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:

- Carrathool Races
- Red Dust and Paddy Melons Gallery
- Hillston Museum
- Willandra National Park and Historic Homestead
- Birdwatching at Rankins Springs

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Product Development – Hillston Arid Zone Botanic Garden, river access and other nature-themed product development

Coolamon

Description of the area

Coolamon Shire comprises 2,433 km² and is located adjacent to the Newell Highway and the Burley Griffin Way, comprising the local centre of Coolamon and the smaller towns and villages of Ganmain, Ardlethan, Marrar, Matong and Beckom, just north of Wagga Wagga. The shire had a population of 4,385 in 2021,

- Some of the key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:
  - » The Coolamon Cheese Co
  - » Coolamon Fire Museum
  - » Murumbang Interpretive Walk
  - » Ganmain Historical Museum
  - » Station Collective
  - » Canola Trail Development (shared with Temora and Junee)
- Some of the other key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:
  - » Ark Coolamon
  - » Matong/Ganmain Ghost signs
  - » Coolamon Up-to-Date Store Precinct
  - » Coolamon Shire Bike and Walking Tracks, including Kindra State Forrest
  - » Ardlethan and District Museum
  - » Restore Heritage Trail (in development)
  - » Gigi The Gourmet Grocer
  - » Sweet Briar B&B

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Product Development – Further development of existing product incl: Coolamon Cheese developments, Coolamon Hotel redevelopment, Brushwood farm tours
- Events – growth and establishment of new visitor attracting events such as Yield Festival and Canola Festival
- Continue development and growth of touring trails and experiences between neighbouring towns and shires, including the Canola Trail

Cootamundra - Gundagai

Description of the area

Cootamundra–Gundagai Regional Council was formed on 12 May 2016 through a merger of the Cootamundra and Gundagai Shires. The council has an area of 3,981 square kilometres and is traversed by the Murrumbidgee River and occupies the slopes of the western side of the Great Dividing Range between Yass and Tumut and to the north the beginning of the northern part of the Riverina plains.

The two main towns in the shire, Cootamundra and Gundagai, are halfway between Sydney and Melbourne, with the Hume Highway, Olympic Highway and Melbourne to Sydney rail line playing a crucial role in the economy. The council had an estimated population of 11,403 in 2021.

In 2022 it was announced that the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council would be demerged, with elections for the 2 separate councils of Cootamundra and Gundagai being planned for late 2024.

- The following are recognised by DRM as regionally significant experiences:
  - » Flash Jacks
  - » Dog on the Tuckerbox
  - » The Coota Beach Volleyball (event)
  - » Snake Gully Cup (event)
  - » Kimo Estate
  - » Kestrel Nest EcoHut
  - » Hillview Farmstay
- Some of the other key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:
  - » Cootamundra Bird Walk
  - » Captains Walk Cootamundra
  - » The Arts Centre Cootamundra
  - » Fields of Gold Festival
  - » Cootamundra Cup
  - » Old Gundagai Gaol Ghost Hunt
  - » The Coffee Pedaler, Gundagai
  - » Gundagai River Walk
  - » Gundagai Architectural Heritage Walk
  - » Australian Road Transport Heritage Centre
  - » Murrumbidgee River Yoga and Walk
  - » The Wired Lab
  - » Cootamundra Wattle Fair

Cootamundra - Gundagai (continued)

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Product Development – redevelopment of heritage tourism offerings such as The Dog on the Tuckerbox, Old Gundagai Mill, Prince Alfred Bridge memorialisation
- Product development – new agritourism development – on-farm accommodation, dining and experiences
- Trails – Rail Trail, Mountain bike trails, cycling trails

Edward River

Description of the area

The Edward River Local Government Area covers the urban area of Deniliquin and surrounding area to the north and west. Edward River Council had a population of 8,456 in 2021. The council area supports both dryland and irrigated agriculture, with one of the most extensive high water irrigation areas in NSW, including significant production of rice and winter cereals, and sheep farming.

The Deni Ute Muster is an iconic Australian event held outside Deniliquin each year.

Some of the key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:

- » Edward River
- » BIG4 Deniliquin
- » The Depot
- » The Deni Ute Muster (event) + Museum
- » Murray Darling Scenic Flights
- » North Bundy Station Stay
- » The Crossing Café
- » Peppin Heritage Centre

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Implementation of Peppin Heritage Centre Masterplan (new and enhanced displays, new accessible multi-media exhibitions, improved accessibility)
- Development of agritourism experiences
- Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre (tours through the Island Sanctuary to share info about traditional plants)

Federation

Description of the area

Federation Council is centrally located in the heart of the Riverina on the Murray River and is home to the local centres of Corowa, Mulwala and Urana and the smaller towns of Howlong and Oaklands. The council area sits between the regional cities of Albury and Wagga Wagga and had a population of 12,899 in 2021.

It is unique in the region for its extensive lake systems.

Some of the other key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:

- » Lake Mulwala
- » Corowa Whisky & Chocolate Factory
- » Circa 1936
- » Club Mulwala
- » Blacksmith Provedore
- » Mulwala Golf Resort, Australia's largest public access golf resort
- » The Sienna Daisy, PS Cumberoona & MV Paradise Queen
- » Mulwala Water Ski club
- » Mulwala Sports Fishing
- » Pioneer Museum Mulwala
- » Savernake Station

Federation (continued)

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Murray Valley National Park and Cultural Walk
- Urana Lake Master Plan (to consider, among other matters, potential commercial development and management of water supply within the Lake)
- Corowa Eco Tourist Resort (The development of a mixed use resort including glamping, caravan park and self-contained with potential for school groups. This would take advantage of a river setting and environmental values)
- Corowa Whisky (Business Event Development and Visitor Experience enhancement)

Cross Border Priorities
- Yarrawonga Airport upgrade – Moira
- Rutherglen Winery Experiences - Indigo

Greater Hume

Description of the area

Greater Hume is located between the regional cities of Albury and Wagga Wagga and had a population of 11,157 in 2021. The shire is home to the local centre of Holbrook, as well as several smaller towns, including Culcairn, Henty, Jindera and Walla Walla. The towns and villages play a key role in servicing traffic between regional and metropolitan centres, while also servicing surrounding agricultural industries. The shire's strategic location between Albury and Wagga Wagga creates opportunities for both economic and population growth.

Some of the key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:

- » The Ten Mile
- » Flyfaire Wines
- » The Holbrook Submarine precinct
- » Woomargama National Park
- » Hume and Hovell Track
- » Morgan's Lookout
- » Lake Hume
- » Henty Machinery Field Days (event)
- » Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Hanel's Lookout at Woomargama National Park (development of Hanel's Lookout at Woomargama National Park along with broader development of visitor attractions within the National Park)
- Hume and Hovell Track development (development and connection to Murray River Adventure Trails)
- Greater Hume Museum Trail and Reinvestment (implement strategy actions to invest in visitor experiences of the 11 museums across the region and development of touring route to link experiences
- Development of water-based tourism experiences on Lake Hume, Billabong Creek, Gum Swamp and Doodle Comer Swamp

Griffith

Description of the area

Griffith is a major regional city in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area that is located in the north-western part of the Riverina region, known commonly as the food bowl of NSW. Griffith has a population of 27,086 (2021 Census).

Griffith is highly connected by road and can be accessed from Sydney and Canberra via the Hume Highway and the Burley Griffin Way, and from Melbourne via the Newell Highway and either by using the Kidman Way or the Irrigation Way. Griffith can be accessed from other places like Adelaide, Orange and Bathurst through the Mid-Western Highway and the Rankin Springs Road from Rankin Springs and the Kidman Way from Goolgowi.

Griffith provides services to a wide catchment of over 50,000 people through its base hospital, St Vincent's Private Community Hospital, tertiary education services and a major regional airport. Griffith has one of the largest TAFE campuses in the Riverina and is the regional city servicing the vast Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area.

Griffith is associated with good wine and food, primarily as a result of its diverse population, with notable contributions by Italian-Australians. Griffith's multi-ethnic population is now absorbing new national groups, including a significant Sikh Indian community.

- The following are recognised by DRM as regionally significant experiences:
  - » Yarran Wines
  - » Calabria Family Wines
  - » Bull and Bell Steakhouse and The Gem Hotel
  - » Limone Dining
  - » Piccolo Family Farm
  - » Zecca Handmade Italian
  - » Griffith Spring Fest (including Citrus Sculptures)
  - » Shaheedi Tournament / Sikh Games (event)
  - » A Taste of Italy Griffith (including Griffith Italian Festival)
  - » Riverina Agricultural Field Days (event)
  - » Griffith Pioneer Park Museum
  - » Bella Vita Tours
  - » Hermit's Caves Lookout and Precinct
  - » Lake Wyangan
- Some of the other key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:
  - » Various wineries, including De Bortoli Wines
  - » Providores such as Riverina Grove and Bertoldo's Pasticceria
  - » The Griffith Italian Museum
  - » Griffith Regional Art Gallery
  - » Banna Land Festival (event)
  - » Griffith Sculpture Walk
  - » La Scala Restaurant
  - » Quest Griffith
  - » The Gem Hotel
  - » Providores such as Bertoldo's Pasticceria and La Piccola Grosseria

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Development of high quality culinary, winery and agritourism experiences including on-farm accommodation
- Continued development of sporting, cultural and business events and increased supporting accommodation
- To develop outdoor, nature based visitor experiences, particularly walking and cycle tracks around the city and surrounds
- To develop a safer and more inviting visitor experience at Lake Wyangan and the Hermit's Caves & Hermit's Caves Lookout precinct.

Hay

Description of the area

Hay Shire is situated on the Murrumbidgee River and incorporates the town of Hay and the villages of Booligal, Maude and One Tree, and had a population of 2,882 in 2021. The local government area is serviced by the Sturt, Mid-Western and Cobb highways, intersecting at Hay, which is halfway between Sydney and Adelaide and about 400 kilometres from Melbourne. The town of Hay is surrounded by the iconic Hay Plains. It's a place to discover striking Outback sunsets, intriguing museums, winding cycleways and a rich agricultural heritage. Hay is at the centre of the Long Paddock driving route, making it a logical stop on your journey from The Murray, through the Riverina and into the centre of NSW.

- The following are recognised by DRM as regionally significant experiences:
  - » Shear Outback – the Australian Shearers Hall of Fame
  - » Rainbow on the Plains (event)
- Some of the other key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:
  - » Sunset viewing area for the Hay Plains
  - » Bidgee Riverside Trail
  - » Dunera Museum
  - » Hay Gaol
  - » Bishop's Lodge Historic House
  - » Hay Races
  - » The Bank B&B
  - » The Convent Accom & Cafe
  - » Corynnia Station – Farmstay B&B
  - » Nimmie Caira / Gayini Wetland area

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Product development – Development of tourism precincts including a family hub, history hub and nature/outdoor hub as identified in the Hay DMP
- Events – continued development of visitor attracting events including the Rainbow on the Plains Festival
- Product Development – Indigenous tourism within the Gayini region and surrounds

Junee

Description of the area

Junee Shire is a rural area and home to the local centre of Junee, which provides services to the surrounding towns and villages of Bethungra, Illabo, Wantabadgery, Harefield, Old Junee, Junee Reefs, Dirnaseer and Eurongilly. The shire had a population of 6,415 in 2021. Located on the Southern Train Line between Sydney and Melbourne, and with the regional city of Wagga Wagga only 41 kilometres away. A large portion of visitors to Junee are linked to the large Junee Correctional Centre.

Junee has a rich Railway History and is included in the plans for the new Inland Rail link through NSW.

- The following are recognised by DRM as regionally significant experiences:
  - » Junee Licorice & Chocolate Factory
  - » Canola Trail (shared with Temora and Coolamon)
- Some of the key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:
  - » Broadway Museum
  - » Bethungra Rail Spiral
  - » Monte Cristo Homestead Ghost Tours
  - » Junee Rotary Farmers Market
  - » Junee Roundhouse Railway Museum

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Product development – further development of existing tourism offerings including Junee Liquorice Factory, Junee Hotel and Railway heritage experiences
- Events – Further development of the Atheneum Theatre for events and the Canola Festival
- Continued development of experiences between areas of interest within the shire and neighbouring towns including touring routes and trails
- Development and implementation of master plan for Bethungra Dam Reserve, Sandy Beach and a Cultural and Visitor Information Centre
- Development of agritourism experiences within the Junee Shire.

Leeton

Description of the area

Leeton Shire is situated approximately 550 kilometres west of Sydney and 450 kilometres north of Melbourne, in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. The shire includes the town of Leeton and villages of Yanco, Whitton, Murrami and Wamoon, and had a population of 11,452 people in 2021.Leeton is the heart of SunRice Country, as it is home to the headquarters of SunRice corporation, one of Australia's largest food exporters. It is also home to cotton ginning facility, Southern Cotton.

Leeton Shire has a strong Art Deco history and is capitalising on this with events, streetscaping and themed promotion.

- The following are recognised by DRM as regionally significant experiences:
  » Whitton Malthouse
  » Art Deco Festival (event)
  » SunRice Festival (event)
- Some of the other key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:
  » Roxy Theatre
  » Cellar doors at Lillypilly Estate Winery and Toorak Winery
  » Ramsar listed Fivebough and Turkey Flat wetlands
  » Rocking Horse Restorations Accommodation (glamping, farmstay and B&B)
  » Gogeldrie Weir
  » Murrumbidgee Valley National Park

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Redevelopment and enhancement of nature-based tourism product such as the Gogeldrie Riverside Precinct development, Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands and increased access to Murrumbidgee National Park (NPWS)
- Continued development of high quality agritourism experiences including accommodation, dining and experiences e.g. Whitton Malthouse, Murray Cod Australia
- Continued development of Art Deco place-making and branding related to building restoration (i.e., Leeton Museum and Gallery), events (i.e., annual Australian Art Deco Festival Leeton) and themed touring routes (i.e., Art Deco Way Leeton and Murrumbidgee Trails).

Lockhart

Description of the area

Lockhart Shire is located to the south-west of Wagga Wagga and had an estimated population of 3,319 in 2021. The shire includes the local centre of Lockhart and other towns and villages including The Rock, Milbrulong, Yerong Creek and Pleasant Hills. Lockhart is known as the verandah town, as its streetscape of restored buildings with ornate lacework verandahs has been well conserved. The town is classified by the National Trust.

An observatory has just opened at the Rock, led by Charles Sturt University, and could be used as a significant visitor driver to the town.

- The following are recognised by DRM as regionally significant experiences:
  » The Rock National Park / Kengal Aboriginal Place
  » The Rock Regional Observatory
  » Spirit of the Land Lockhart Festival (event)
  » Galore Hill Scenic Reserve
- Some of the other key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:
  » Green's Gunyah Museum
  » Doris Golder Wool Art Gallery
  » Lockhart Sculpture and Heritage Trail
  » Lockhart Shire Water Tower Murals - Lockhart, Milbrulong and Yerong Creek

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:
- Product development – strategic development of tourism product at The Rock Nature Reserve / Kengal Aboriginal Place and surrounds – this includes nature walks, Indigenous experiences, observatory experiences and events
- Product development – major visitor-attracting infrastructure development within the Lockhart Shire region
- Development and Implementation of Lockhart CBD, Brookong Creek and Galore Hill Scenic Reserve Masterplans
- Development of Agritourism, Nature and Cultural Experiences, Trails and Events.

Murray River

Description of the area

The Murray River Council area is one of the largest geographically in the Riverina Murray region and is located on the NSW–Victorian border. It had a population of 12,850 in 2021. The local centre of Moama, together with its Victorian neighbour Echuca, service a population of well over 20,000 people. Other smaller towns and villages in the council area include Mathoura, Bunnaloo, Womboota, Cummeragunja, Barham, Moulamein, Wakool, Tooleybuc, Murray Downs, Caldwell, Koraleigh and Goodnight.

Located on the Cobb Highway just three hours from Melbourne, the area is also serviced by rail transport. Moama is serviced by daily passenger bus (via Echuca) and rail connections to Melbourne and many regional cities and local centres.

Tourism is a strong economic driver, and the area is a popular destination for visitors with attractions including the Murray River and other natural watercourses, red gum forests, the historic port of Echuca and a number of cultural and recreational events.

Some of the key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:

- » Morrisons Winery & 1710 Brew Co
- » Riverboats Music Festival (event)
- » Southern 80 (event)
- » Winter Blues Festival (event)
- » Perricoota Wine Region
- » Pop and Pour (event)
- » Restdown Wines
- » The Timbercutter Mathoura
- » Murray River Paddlesteamers
- » Moama Bowling Club & The Junction

- » Rich River Golf Club
- » Five Mile Mountain Bike Trail
- » Moama Lights (event)
- » Long Paddock Touring Route
- » Mathoura Heritage Trail
- » Mooloomoon Shearing Shed
- » Moulamein Heritage Precinct
- » Barmah National Park
- » Kingfisher Cruises

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:
- Moama Bowling Club Resort Development
- Timbercutter Eco-accommodation
- Bridge Arts Project
- Moama Lights – event expansion
- Moulamein Heritage Precinct Development
- Meninya Street Masterplan Implementation Project
- Riverside accommodation development in Barham
- Rich River Golf Resort motel redevelopment

Cross Border Priorities
- Barmah Forest National Parks Experience – Moira
- Australian Star Paddlesteamer – Campaspe
- Echuca Airport Redevelopment – Campaspe
- Echuca Visitor Events Precinct Plan - Campaspe
- Gunbower Tourism Investment Masterplan - Gannawarra
- Koondrook Butter Factory Arts Precinct and Murray River Brewery - Gannawarra
- Pental Island Wildlife Reserve – Swan Hill
- Lake Tyrell Visitor Dispersal Project – Swan Hill

Murrumbidgee

Description of the area

Murrumbidgee Council combined area comprises 6,880 square kilometres and covers the towns of Coleambally, Darlington Point and Jerilderie and the surrounding cropping and pastoral areas. The population of Murrumbidgee Shire was 3,353 in 2021.

- Some of the key attractions found in the LGA (recognised by DRM as regionally significant experiences) include:
  - » Altina Wildlife Park
  - » Taste Coleambally – Food & Farm Festival (event)
  - » Darlington Point Riverside Caravan Park
- Some of the other key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:
  - » Yarrow Park Olive Grove and Vineyard
  - » Coleambally Irrigation Cooperative Waterwheel Display
  - » Goanna Walking Track (Indigenous themed)
  - » Willbriggie Regional Park (river front beaches)
  - » Lake Jerilderie
  - » The Ned Kelly Raid Trail 1879
  - » Warangesda Festival
  - » Waddi Regional Cultural and Heritage Centre

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Product Development – nature and outdoor product development including Altina Wildlife Park improvements
- Accommodation – Darlington Point Riverside Caravan Park redevelopment and a targeted increase in short and long-term accommodation options for visitors, including for events

Narrandera

Description of the area

Narrandera Shire is centrally located at the junction of the Sturt and Newell highways, and at the gateway to the productive Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. The shire had a population of 5,698 in 2021, and includes the local centre of Narrandera and the smaller towns of Barellan, Grong Grong and Binya, which are supported by the shire's close proximity to the regional cities of Griffith and Wagga Wagga.

- The following are recognised by DRM as regionally significant experiences:
  - » Lake Talbot Water Park
  - » Sandhills Artefacts
  - » Barellan Good Old Days Festival (event)
- Some of the other key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:
  - » Narrandera Nature Reserve is part of the Murrumbidgee Valley National Park
  - » Wiradjuri Honour Wall
  - » Narrandera Bike and Hike Track
  - » Two Foot Heritage Walk (self-guided)
  - » Parkside Cottage Museum
  - » Narrungdera Earth Fest
  - » Narrandera Koala Fest

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Product development – development of products and experiences related to the koala population in the Narrandera region, as well as enhanced Indigenous cultural tourism experiences
- Events – further development of visitor attracting events including the Narrungdera Earth Fest Indigenous Festival

Snowy Valleys

Description of the area

Snowy Valleys Council area is located on the south-western slopes of the Snowy Mountains, about halfway between Sydney and Melbourne. Snowy Valleys Council formed in 2016 with the merging of Tumut and Tumbarumba Shires. With a population of 14,891 in 2021, the council area now includes the local centres of Tumut and Tumbarumba, along with other smaller towns and villages including Batlow, Adelong, Talbingo, Brungle, Cabramurra, Khancoban, Jingellic, Rosewood, Tooma and Laurel Hill. Communities to the south of the local government area have established cross-border connections with Victoria and rely on some Victorian services.

There are significant opportunities for Snowy Valleys given its proximity to Canberra and Wagga Wagga.

The Snowy Valleys region was significantly affected by the Black Summer Bushfires in 2019 and is still recovering.

The Snowy Valleys is the only alpine region in the Riverina Murray.

- The following are recognised by DRM as regionally significant experiences:
  - » Kosciusko National Park
  - » Yarrangobilly Caves & Thermal Pool
  - » Nimbo Fork Lodge & Three Blue Ducks Dining
  - » Snowy Valleys Sculpture Trail
  - » Courabyra Winery
  - » Snowy Valleys Rail Trail (Tumbarumba to Rosewood)
  - » Blowering Dam
  - » Tumut River Brewing Co
  - » Hume & Hovell Track
  - » Batlow Ciderfest (event)
  - » Winter Bites Festival (event)
  - » Tumbafest (Event)
  - » Mt Selwyn Snow Resort
- Some of the other key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:
  - » Our Snowy Tours
  - » Nest Café & Cinema
  - » Allegiance Wines
  - » Ladbroken Distillery
  - » Truenorth Helicopter Tours
  - » Adelong Falls
  - » Khancoban Pondage
  - » Talbingo Village
  - » Paddys River Falls
  - » Elm Cottage
  - » The Coffee Pedaler
  - » Aussie Fly Fisher – Trout Drifting
  - » Bicentennial National Trail (Section 11)
  - » Harriet House and Two Tarts Cafe

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Development of the Hume & Hovell Track (for inclusion in the Great Walks of Australia collective)
- Sealing of Brindabella Rd between Tumut and the ACT border
- Apple Thief Cider House (Batlow)
- Growth and Development of the Snowy Valleys Winter Festivals Season
- Support of key projects identified in the Snowy Valleys Regional Tracks and Trails Masterplan (due Dec 2022)
- Leveraging of opportunities created by the Snowy Mountain Special Activations Precinct (SAP)
- Mountain Bike Trails in Tumbarumba and Talbingo
- Yarrangobilly Caves Precinct redevelopment (NPWS)
- Further development of the Snowy Valleys Sculpture Trail

Cross Border Priorities
- The Man from Snowy River Bush Festival – Corryong/Towong

Temora

Description of the area

Temora Shire is located approximately 400 kilometres south-west of Sydney and approximately 80 kilometres north of Wagga Wagga. Major industries include agriculture and aviation. Temora Shire had a population of 6,034 in 2021 and includes the local centre of Temora and the villages of Ariah Park, and Springdale. It is situated on the Burley Griffin Way linking Canberra and Griffith and the Goldfields Way which link Albury and Wagga Wagga to the Newell Highway.

- The following are recognised by DRM as regionally significant experiences:
  - » Temora Aviation Museum
  - » Warbirds Downunder (event)
  - » Canola Trail (shared with Junee and Coolamon)
  - » Diamonds and Dust
- Some of the other key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:
  - » Lake Centenary including V8 JetBoat Track
  - » Bundawarrah Centre (Rural Museum and Temora Ambulance Museum)
  - » Ariah Park (heritage village)
  - » T-Light (event)
  - » Mary Gilmore Cultural Festival (event)
  - » Railway Temora

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Product development – Temora Railway Precinct development including Pardey & Co Flour Mill and Railway Station and historic hotel redevelopments
- Trails/Routes – continued development of touring routes and trails, and associated experiences between neighbouring towns and shire
- Events – continued expansion of events including the Temora Aviation Museum and Lake Centenary events
- Construction of the NSW Ambulance Museum as a state-significant museum

Wagga Wagga

Description of the area

Wagga Wagga (informally called Wagga) is the largest inland regional city in NSW. With an urban population of more than 67,609 (2021 Census), Wagga Wagga is located midway between Sydney and Melbourne. It is also the largest retail, commercial, administrative and population centre in the Riverina Murray, servicing the needs of surrounding settlements in a catchment of over 185,000 people. Its significant economy relies on agriculture, health, defence forces and education. The intermodal hub and special activation precinct (SAP) for Wagga Wagga is now under construction, and this means the city it will continue to grow in population and servicing requirements.

- The following are recognised by DRM as regionally significant experiences:
  - » Wagga Wagga Art Gallery and National Art Glass Collection
  - » Wagga Wagga Gold Cup Carnival and Town Plate Cup Day (event) Bundyi Cultural Tours
  - » Gears & Beers (event)
  - » Festival of W (event)
  - » Food I Am
  - » Riverside - Wagga Beach
  - » The Charles Dining Room
  - » Pomingalarna Multisport Cycling Complex
  - » Museum of the Riverina
  - » Wagga Wagga Botanic Gardens Precinct, Zoo & Aviary
  - » Wiradjuri Trail
  - » Pastorale by Meccanico
- Some of the other key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:
  - » Borambola Wines & Riverina Gin
  - » Charles Sturt Winery
  - » Bidgee Strawberries and Cream
  - » Cottontails Winery
  - » Wollundry Grove Olives
  - » Meccanico Espresso & Wine
  - » Thirsty Crow Brewing Co.
  - » Ashculme Textiles
  - » Mates Gully Café and Boutique Accommodation
  - » The Houston Wagga
  - » Wagga Food & Wine Festival
  - » Spring Jam Children's Festival
  - » Lake Albert
  - » Marrambidya Wetlands
  - » Wagga Wagga Mardi Gras Festival (event)

Wagga Wagga (continued)

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Implementation of Wagga Wagga City Council Strategic and Master Plans including but not limited to the Cultural Plan 2030, Events Strategy and Wiradjuri Trail Masterplan
- Development and growth of major events and festivals. Including attracting and hosting state/nationally significant sporting events, arts and cultural tours and festivals
- Development of high-quality culinary and agritourism experiences in Wagga Wagga and surrounds
- Develop infrastructure to support connectivity and economic growth, including the Wagga Wagga Airport upgrade, electric vehicle (EV) charging investment, and attraction and investment for short-term and long-term accommodation.
- Continued development of Wiradjuri and First Nations visitor experiences, including immersive, educational and engaging Cultural experiences, cultural tours and experiences along the Wiradjuri Trail

Wentworth

Description of the area

Wentworth Shire is located just north of Mildura, adjacent to the Murray and Darling Rivers. The Shire's main roads are the Sturt and Silver City Highways. The Shire comprises some 26,269km2 and its main towns are Wentworth, Buronga, Gol Gol, Dareton and Pooncarie. The Shire had a population of 7,453 in 2021.

The town is serviced by regular passenger air services to Sydney, Melbourne, and Broken Hill, which are available from Mildura.

Some of the other key attractions found in the Local Government Area include:

- » Trentham Estate Winery & Restaurant
- » Junction of the Darling and Murray Rivers
- » Perry Sandhills
- » Old Wentworth Gaol
- » Barkindji Wiimpatya Murra Centre (Bmeet)
- » Lock 10 & Weir Restaurant
- » Wentworth Military Museum
- » PS Ruby Wentworth
- » Pooncarrie and Wentworth Races
- » Pooncarrie Telegraphic Hotel (Outback Pub)

- » Mungo National Park
- » Wentworth & Coomealla Golf Courses
- » Mungo Lodge
- » Mildura Wentworth Country Music Festival (event)
- » Murray Darling 110 Ski Classic (event)
- » Gol Gol Hotel
- » Coomealla Club

Priority projects

The priority projects to grow the visitor economy in the local area have been identified as being:

- Wentworth Eco Resort Development (Trentham Waters)
- Light/State (Bruce Munro Light Installation, a joint project with Mildura)
- Criterium/HPV track
- Remarketing of the Murray Darling Wine region as a premium wine region
- Willandra Lakes and Mungo National Park - development of a visitor-related strategic plan

Cross Border Priorities

- Interstate Rail Connectivity project
- Agritourism opportunities (Mildura is Australia's most valuable agricultural region)
- Houseboat & River Cruise development

Appendix 8: NSW Government Cost Benefit Analysis

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The NSW Government uses Cost Benefit Analysis to assess the social, economic and environmental impacts of infrastructure proposals including visitor economy infrastructure. Where feasible, Cost Benefit Analysis will be used to prioritise proposals. The following considerations are designed to help guide prioritisation and decision-making.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	KEY CONSIDERATIONS
Creates growth opportunities from domestic and international markets	Facilitate growth in demand and address capacity constraints to develop a nationally and globally competitive visitor economy. » The investment addresses identifiable capacity constraints or supports growth in demand as informed by national and international benchmarking, Regional Economic Development Plans and Destination Management Plans. » The investment supports the 2030 Visitor Expenditure Targets and aligns with the Sydney and NSW brand.
Supports a prosperous NSW	Create economic benefits that outweigh the economic costs. » The investment generates economic benefits either in the form of increased tourism expenditure, which benefits NSW economy through higher employment and value added. » The investment generates economic benefits for local residents through access to additional infrastructure and amenities. » The investment generates increased opportunities for direct and indirect employment. » The economic benefits outweigh the costs to the government of supporting the infrastructure.
Aligns and supports other infrastructure strategies and plans	Recognise alignment and support for other government strategies. » Promotes urban and regional development. » Creates sustainable commercial opportunities for indigenous cultural businesses and support Indigenous tourism. » Supports accessible, inclusive, and special interest tourism and encouraging skill development in the sector. » Develops and renew regional government assets. » Aligns with the objectives in REDS, DMPs and local government policies and plans.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (continued)

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	KEY CONSIDERATIONS
Supports equity and access for all	Distribute benefits to disadvantaged and local communities. » The infrastructure utilises universal design principles and promotes accessibility. » Promotes increased participation of disadvantaged young people. » Promotes increased participation of Aboriginal people. » Sustains jobs and generates additional jobs in the visitor economy and associated supply chains. » Supports and benefits local groups.
Fosters a sustainable visitor economy	Ongoing financial viability and contribution to a sustainable and resilient visitor economy. » The investment generates revenue to support operation and management that is likely to minimise unexpected government outlays. » Promotes year-round visitation and grows capacity to reduce reliance on visitation in peak seasons. » Incorporates environmentally sustainable features (such as renewable energy, waste reduction, water, and energy efficiency). » Improves the public realm and adds to the sense of place and community. » Is built in an appropriate location with appropriate materials and responds to the changing climate including more extreme and frequent natural disasters such as bushfires, flood, coastal erosion and inundation.

Table 14. Assessment criteria for NSW Government Cost Benefit Analysis

Holbrook Submarine Museum, Holbrook. Credit: Destination NSW.

Riverina Murray
Destination Management Plan

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Destination
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