

FEBRUARY 2023



ECHUCA-MOAMA LOCAL AREA PLAN AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS



Destination
Riverina Murray NSW



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters that surround the Murray River. We acknowledge and respect their history, culture and continuous connection to Country.

We pay our respects to elders – past, present and emerging who have cared for this Country for over 60,000 years.

This landscape, rich in story and opportunity, plays a pivotal part in our visitor economy and we thank Victoria and New South Wales' First Peoples for sharing this with us all.



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ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------|--|
| DMP | Destination Management Plan |
| DN | Destination Networks |
| DRNSW | Department of Regional NSW |
| DRM | Destination Riverina Murray |
| EMT | Echuca Moama Tourism |
| GMW | Goulburn Murray Water |
| LAP | Local Area Plan |
| LGA | Local Government Area |
| MDBA | Murray-Darling Basin Authority |
| MRAT | Murray River Adventure Trail |
| MRT | Murray Regional Tourism |
| NPWS | NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services |
| NVS | National Visitor Survey |
| PTV | Public Transport Victoria |
| RDV | Regional Development Victoria |
| TRA | Tourism Research Australia |
| VFR | Visiting Friends and Relatives |

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Daytrip Visitor | Those who travel for a round trip distance of at least 50 kilometres, are away from home for at least 4 hours, and who do not spend a night away from home as part of their travel. Same day travel as part of overnight travel is excluded. |
| Overnight Visitor | People aged 15 years and over who undertake an overnight trip of one night or more and at least 40 kilometres away from home are referred to as overnight visitors. Only those trips where the respondent is away from home for less than 12 months are in scope of the NVS. |
| International Visitor | A person is defined as an international visitor to Australia if they are currently a resident overseas, have been in Australia less than one year and are aged 15 years or over. |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

Murray Regional Tourism and Destination Riverina Murray have prepared Local Area Plans for 10 of the Murray region's prominent destinations.

The Local Area Plans are strategic documents that capture local aspirations and directions at a high-level to inform the Murray Region Destination Management Plan (2023-2027) (available [here](#)) and the NSW Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan (2023-2030). This has ensured local needs and priorities have been captured across both Destination Management Plans.

The Local Area Plans provide the framework for local stakeholders to work collaboratively and in partnership with Murray Regional Tourism and Destination Riverina Murray towards strengthening the regional visitor economy.

This Plan has been prepared for the destination of Echuca-Moama. This includes the destinations in proximity, as described in Section 1.

ANNUAL VISITOR ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

1.4M

Visitors

\$344M

Spend

UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION WITHIN THE MURRAY REGION

The Port of Echuca, the paddle steamer cruising and the heritage backdrop and stories of Echuca-Moama are the unique selling proposition for this destination within the context of the Murray Region.

The Port of Echuca provides an anchoring point for the destination and can act as a strong visual landmark.



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR THIS DESTINATION

A range of recommended actions have been identified through consultation with industry and local government stakeholders during the Local Area Plan workshops, assessment of existing local documents and strategies, and in response to visitor economy needs and opportunities for the destination.

These actions are a guide only. It is the role of stakeholders to further investigate the viability and opportunity of each project.

The table below provides a summary of the recommended actions.

| Product, Experience and Events | Infrastructure and Planning | Branding, Marketing and Visitor Servicing | Industry Development and Workforce |
|--|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-Star Hotel and Conference Centre Cruising Experience Investment Murray Esplanade and Port of Echuca Activation Night-Time Economy Activation Plan Waterfront Food, Drink and Entertainment Activation Bridge Art Project Barmah Indigenous Experience Development Plan "On Farm" Experiences Murray Winter Night Time Events Accommodation Investment Murray River Adventure Trail Cycle Echuca-Moama | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meninya Street Masterplan Implementation Project Echuca Aerodrome Upgrade Access and Transport Advocacy Bridge to Bridge Masterplan Infrastructure Servicing Advocacy to Address Housing Crisis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bookable Product and Packaging Cross-Border Brand Strategy Cross-Border Marketing Plan Visitor Information Review and Delivery Murray Region Local Ambassador Project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance Regional Workforce Pathways and Promotion Program Skills Development Plan |

1. ECHUCA-MOAMA LOCAL AREA PLAN

1.1. THIS PROJECT

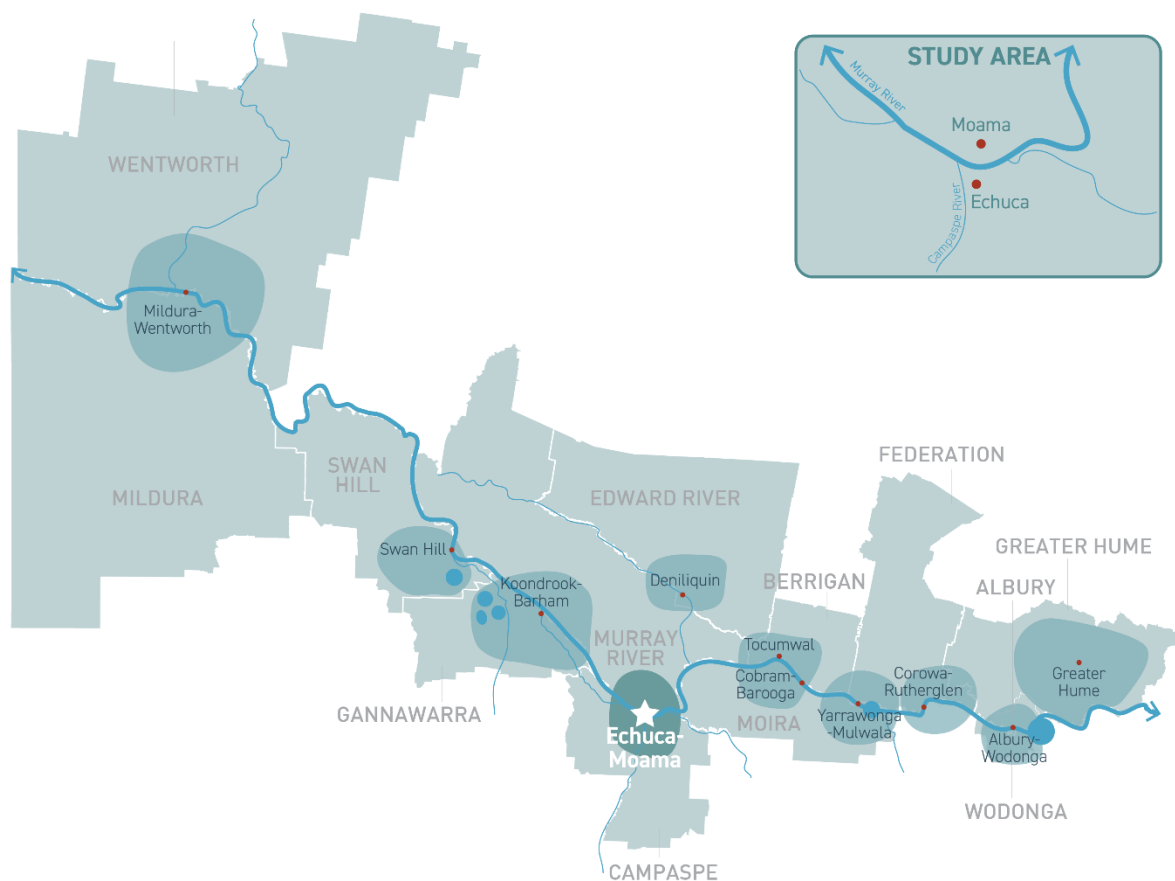
Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) and Destination Riverina Murray (DRM) have prepared Local Area Plans (Plan) for 10 of the Murray region’s prominent destinations, as shown in the map below.

These are strategic documents that capture local aspirations and directions at a high-level to inform the Murray Region Destination Management Plan (DMP) (2023-2027) and the NSW Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan (2023-2030). This has ensured local needs and priorities have been captured across both DMPs.

The Local Area Plans provide the framework for local stakeholders to work collaboratively and in partnership with MRT and DRM towards strengthening the regional visitor economy.

This Plan has been prepared for the destination of Echuca-Moama. This includes the destinations in proximity, as shown in the map below, and does not encompass all towns within the relevant Local Government Areas (LGAs).

F1. STUDY AREA



This project has been funded by Murray Regional Tourism, Destination Riverina Murray, the Victorian State Government and Destination NSW.

PURPOSE AND INTENDED USE OF THE LOCAL AREA PLANS

The Local Area Plans are a partnership between MRT, DRM, Local Government, and industry stakeholders.

The purpose of these Plans is to respond to visitor economy needs and opportunities for Murray region destinations, through a range of recommended actions and suggested next steps. It is intended that stakeholders will collaborate to further define the project specifics and drive the outcomes, in line with local priorities and resourcing.

The Plans are intended to be a reference document and a tool for local stakeholders and partners to collaborate at the destination level. The Plans do not replace local tourism plans and internal council plans.

METHOD

An overview of the project method is shown adjacent.

This Plan has been informed by engagement with local visitor economy stakeholders, review of existing local documentation, and destination research using Tourism Research Australia (TRA) and market research undertaken for the Murray region.

A full-day workshop was undertaken with key stakeholders from industry, local government and other agencies as relevant to the destination. The purpose of the workshop was to identify local issues and opportunities, identify the unique selling proposition for the destination, and develop ideas and solutions for the visitor economy.

This process has ensured the Plan is grounded in local needs and aspirations for the destination.



Context

Review of state, regional and local research, strategics and plans.
A full list of documents reviewed can be found in Appendix A.



Destination Snapshot

Review of visitation data, key products and experiences, market research and target markets.



Key Stakeholder Workshop

1 workshop with 21 operators and government stakeholders.



Project Identification and Prioritisation

Development of projects unique for this destination.

2. DESTINATION SNAPSHOT

2.1. VISITOR ECONOMY

This section provides a snapshot of the Echuca-Moama visitor profile, drawing on data from Tourism Research Australia (TRA), the widely accepted Australian Government data source tracking visitation across Australia.

A profile of existing domestic daytrip and overnight visitation has been provided for the 2019 calendar year¹, in order to reflect a business-as-usual scenario prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data has been provided for Murray River and Campaspe Local Government Areas, due to sampling constraints that prevent further fine-grain analysis.

OVERVIEW

The Echuca-Moama visitor economy attracts 1.4 million visitors, who generate \$344 million in visitor expenditure. This accounts for 22% of visitation to the Murray region.

Majority of visitation to this destination is driven by daytrip visitors (52%), who spend \$85 million. Overnight visitors make up a smaller proportion of visitation (48%), however, they make up a greater proportion of expenditure (75%).

Visitors to this destination are lower yielding when compared to the Murray region average. Daytrip visitors spend on average \$119 per person in Campaspe Shire and \$94 per person in Murray River Shire, when compared to \$138 per person for the Murray region.

Overnight visitors spending approximately \$385 per trip in Campaspe Shire and \$354 per trip in Murray River Shire, which is slightly lower than \$401 per person for the Murray region.

DOMESTIC VISITOR PROFILE

Domestic visitation to Echuca-Moama is primarily driven by holiday and leisure travellers, accounting for 41% of daytrip visitors and 54% of overnight visitors.

This destination has a strong visiting friends and relatives (VFR) market, accounting for 36% of daytrip visitors and 32% of overnight visitors. There is an opportunity to educate locals on the products and experiences available in the destination in order to increase yield from this existing market.

Visitation to Echuca-Moama is primarily driven by the Victorian market, comprising 87% of daytrip visitors and 81% of overnight visitors to this destination. Majority of visitors from within Victoria originate from the greater Melbourne region, which is influenced by the destinations close proximity to Melbourne and being the closest point on the river to Melbourne.

Echuca-Moama sees smaller proportions of visitors originating from outside Victoria, including visitors from NSW and South Australian.

Visitors to this destination are primarily engaging in passive activities, including dining out, VFR and general sightseeing. Passive activities are generally lower yielding, highlighting the need to expand the paid tourism offering in Echuca-Moama to drive visitor yield, including the development of new events, products and experiences.

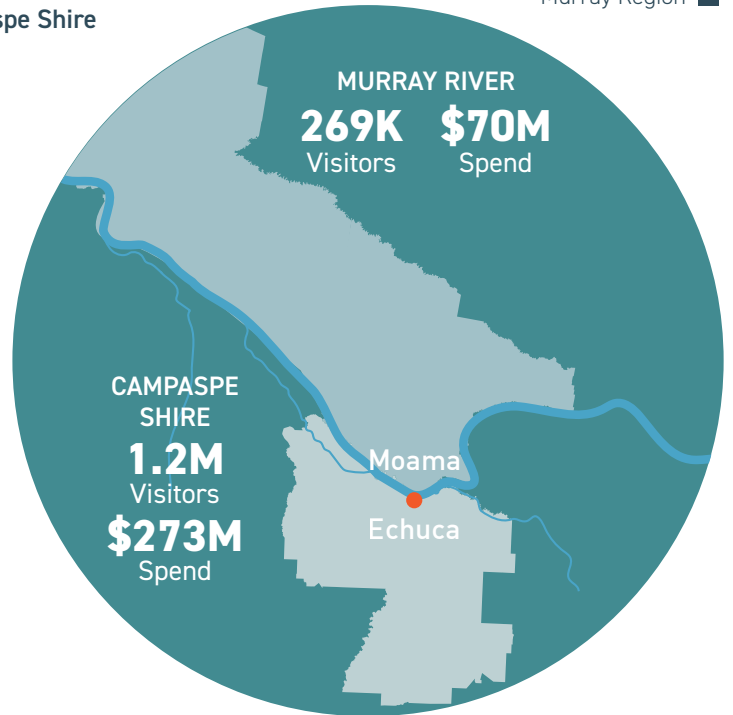
¹ Source: TRA. Visitor numbers, TRA, 2019, based on 2017-19 3 year average. Average spend per visitor, TRA LGA Profile, 2019, based on 2016-19 4 year average. Total spend, calculated by Urban Enterprise, average spend applied to visitor numbers.

VISITOR ECONOMY OVERVIEW

ECHUCA-MOAMA

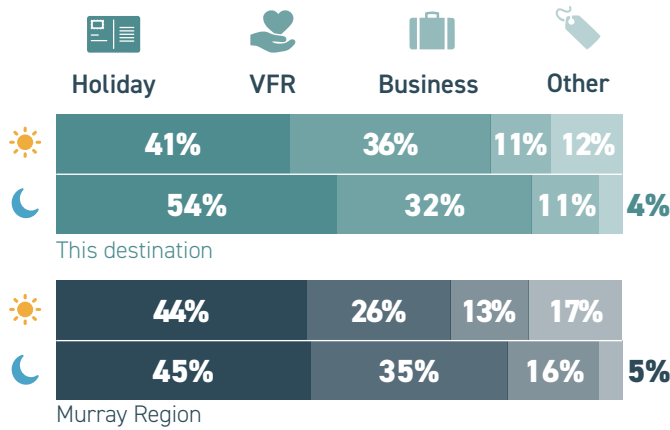
Based on Tourism Research Australia (TRA) data for Campaspe Shire and Murray River, which form this destination.

This destination ■
Murray Region ■

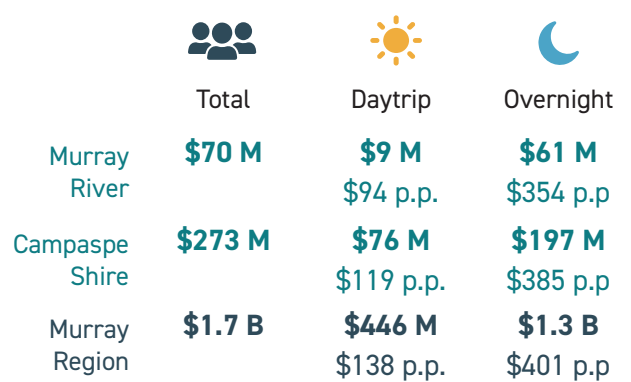


DOMESTIC VISITOR PROFILE

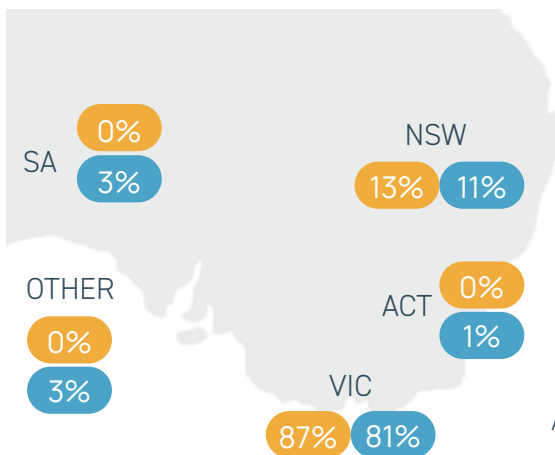
PURPOSE OF VISIT



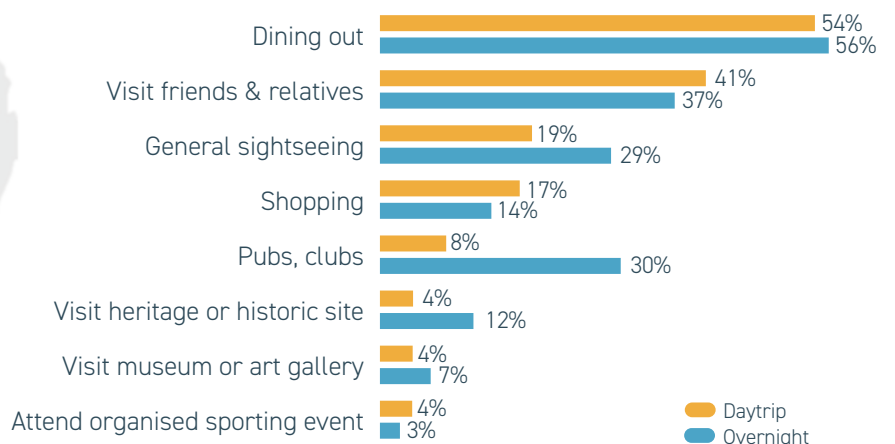
VISITOR SPEND



VISITOR ORIGIN



VISITOR ACTIVITIES



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

2.2. TARGET MARKETS

The Murray region has a market of 5.1 million Australians. This represents past and potential visitors to the region, as identified through representative market research undertaken of 2,000 Australian residents.

These are visitors that travel regularly to regional Australia (at least once every two years pre-COVID) and are highly likely to book a future trip to the Murray region.

Segmentation of the Australian market for the Murray region is shown below, which helps to identify the current and target markets for this destination, to provide a focus for investment and marketing.

Each markets alignment with this destination has been determined below.

T1. TARGET MARKET OVERVIEW

| Proportion of Murray Region Target Market and Market Size | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| Murray Habituals 38% | Back to Basics 8% | Road Trip 8% | Explorer and Discoverer 35% | Luxury Travellers 10% |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 1.93 Million | 0.43 Million | 0.40 Million | 1.78 Million | 0.52 Million |
| The traditional Murray visitor who travels to the Murray at least once every two years - the Murray's biggest advocate. | The simple traveller, the free spirit - escaping to nature to press pause on real life, spend time with loved ones, and hit reset. | Inspired by the freedom of a road trip, this market wants to explore the country, see new destinations and escape the city. | Socially conscious and adventurous travellers, open to travelling to new destinations and seeking new, unique experiences. | With a holiday mindset of indulgence, the luxury traveller seeks relaxation achieved through high quality experiences. |
| Alignment to Echuca-Moama and Reason for Target | | | | |
| Strong | Moderate | Moderate | Strong | Moderate |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-sufficient travellers who typically self-cater and stay in holiday homes, caravan parks or free camping. - Stay for long trips during peak periods. - Travel in large groups, typically family groups, friend groups or multi-generational family groups. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High overlap in characteristics with Murray Habituals, but don't regularly visit or have a strong allegiance to the region. - Seek a relaxing nature-based experience away from the hustle and bustle of town. - Camping and caravanning. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel for longer periods than other segments - opportunity to increase yield and length of stay. - Most likely to travel midweek and off peak – assist in reducing seasonality. - Opportunity for dispersal across the region as open to exploring all the Murray region's destinations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The largest market segment, predominately Millennials, not yet fully captured by the Murray region. - Young and open to new experiences, most likely to engage in a diverse range of experiences. - Want to pack their trip with activities and experiences - a key opportunity to increase visitor yield. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Critical market opportunity to grow visitor yield and support investment in more boutique offerings. - Attracted to food and wine, so growth in this sector is an opportunity to support local producers. - A shift in the perception of Murray region destinations. |

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

2.3. AWARENESS

The following section demonstrates the awareness and reputation of the Murray River and its surrounding regions through consumer research of a representative sample of 2,000 Australians, undertaken in 2022.

Awareness

Echuca-Moama is one of the Murray region's key visitor destinations, however there is a high proportion of the Australian market that have never heard of Echuca-Moama (35%). This reflects a lack of awareness interstate and is potentially reflective of poor marketing activities to interstate markets.

Only a small portion of the Australian market have heard of the destination and have interest in visiting (26%). The remainder either have visited in the past or have heard of the destination and are not interested in visiting.

This demonstrates there is major potential to grow the awareness of Echuca-Moama through coordinated marketing activities.

T2. AWARENESS OF DESTINATIONS IN THE MURRAY

| Destination | I have heard the name and have interest in visiting | I have never heard of this place |
|--------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Albury-Wodonga | 29% | 23% |
| Cobram-Barooga | 28% | 43% |
| Cohuna | 21% | 55% |
| Corowa-Wahgunyah | 23% | 50% |
| Deniliquin | 26% | 39% |
| Echuca-Moama | 26% | 35% |
| Koondrook-Barham | 19% | 60% |
| Mildura | 38% | 12% |
| Rutherglen | 24% | 47% |
| Swan Hill | 36% | 22% |
| Tocumwal | 19% | 55% |
| Wentworth | 31% | 33% |
| Yarrawonga-Mulwala | 23% | 47% |

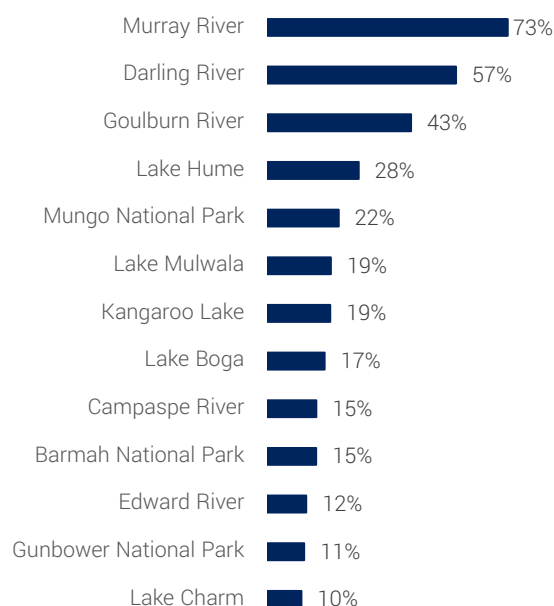
Source: Murray Region Market Research by Urban Enterprise, 2022.

There is very low awareness of National Parks in the Murray region, particularly Barmah National Park (15%), a potential hero asset for this destination, and the Campaspe River (15%). Product and experience development and promotion will help to activate these natural assets and increase their awareness.

The Murray River has the highest levels of awareness within the Australian market (73%), which highlights the importance of connection to the Murray River to strengthen destination awareness and association as part of the Murray region. However, the Murray River is a key feature of all destinations across the Murray region, therefore destinations cannot rely on the river as a point of difference.

Destinations must develop hero products and experiences to differentiate themselves from the rest of the Murray region, which reinforces the potential of Barmah National Park and the Campaspe River.

F3. CONSUMER AWARENESS OF MURRAY REGION NATURE-BASED ASSETS



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

2.4. MURRAY REGION PRODUCT STRENGTHS AND MARKET ASSOCIATIONS

Murray Region Product Strengths

A number of regional product strengths within the Murray region were identified in the 2018 Murray Region DMP. These have been highlighted in the below figure.

The Murray River is the key strength of the Murray region. With this, a number of products and experiences have been developed to capitalise on this natural asset, including camping, bushwalking, water sports, fishing and river cruising and houseboating.

F4. MURRAY REGION PRODUCT STRENGTHS

| Primary Strengths | Secondary Strengths |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Water Sports | Nature based |
| Food, Wine and Produce | Business Events |
| Fishing | |
| Houseboats/River Cruise | Emerging Strengths |
| Golf | Indigenous |
| Festivals and Events | Arts and Culture |
| History and Heritage | Adventure |

Source: Murray Region Destination Management Plan, 2018.

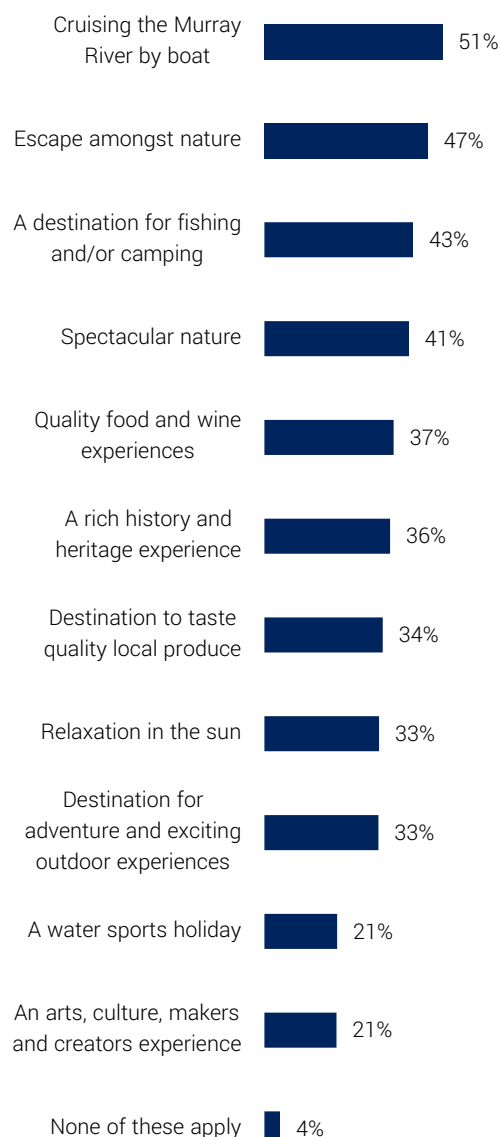
What is the Murray Known for?

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

The below figure shows the broader Australian market expects to cruise the Murray River by boat (51%), escape to nature (47%) and fish or camp (43%) when visiting the Murray region.

The broader Australian market lacks understanding of the breadth of products and experiences currently offered in the Murray region, as indicated by comparatively low perception of the Murray region as a destination for quality food and wine experiences (37%) and quality local produce (37%).

F5. PERCEPTION OF THE MURRAY REGION



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

2.5. DESTINATION STRENGTHS AND UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION

Product Strengths and Potential Hero Experiences for this Destination

Echuca-Moama is a well-developed visitor destination that has a range of products and experiences.

Product strengths of Echuca-Moama include:

- Post settlement history and heritage through the Port of Echuca and Echuca town centre.
- Paddle steamer fleet and surrounding wharf experiences.
- Nature based tourism including Barmah National Park, the River Red Gum forests, canoeing, camping and cycling.
- Food, wine and ferments including dining establishments in Echuca and Moama, as well as one of Australia's youngest wine regions, the Perricoota wine region.
- Water sports including fishing, water skiing and wakeboarding, as well as the largest ski racing event in the world, the Southern 80.
- Tourist parks and family holidays, experienced through the region's riverfront caravan parks and foreshore camping areas.
- Experiential accommodation on houseboats along the Murray River.

Echuca-Moama Unique Selling Proposition (USP) within the Murray Region

The Port of Echuca, the paddle steamer cruising and the heritage backdrop and stories of Echuca-Moama are the USP for this destination.

The Port of Echuca provides an anchoring point for the destination and can act as a strong visual landmark.



How to build on the destination USP?

The USP needs to continue to evolve to meet market expectations, which means there is a need to deliver contemporary experiences within the heritage backdrop. This can include:

- Dining experiences at the wharf, on paddlesteamers and boat trips to wineries (building on the existing wharf to winery tours).
- Telling the Indigenous story in conjunction with the post settlement stories, whilst also giving space to both stories to shine and for people to experience both stories.
- Cultural events utilising the Port and paddlesteamers.
- Art, sculptural and lighting interventions on water and around the Port.
- Continued investment in contemporary cruising and water activation experiences.

2.6. GOVERNANCE

The table below outlines the governance structure for tourism in this destination and the responsibilities for each of the key organisations.

Local Government plays a crucial role in supporting the visitor economy, particularly in working closely with industry to support product and experience development and industry growth.

At the local level, there is fragmentation between Councils and Echuca-Moama Tourism (EMT). In order to develop a strong and sustainable destination, collaboration needs to be enhanced between the bodies to work towards a shared vision and shared goals for the destination.

T3. GOVERNANCE OVERVIEW

| Organisation | Overview | Activities |
|--|--|--|
| Destination NSW | Lead government agency for the NSW tourism and major events sectors. Major role in positioning NSW as one of the world's premier tourism events destinations, as well as achieving the NSW Government's goal of tripling visitation expenditure by 2030. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination marketing. • Industry support and engagement. • Industry training. • Product development. |
| Visit Victoria | Primary tourism and events company for the State Government, involved in research, advocacy and domestic and international marketing. Visit Victoria is a key partner in promotion and strategic planning for the tourism sector. Council should maintain a strong relationship to ensure alignment with Visit Victoria marketing initiatives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination marketing. • Industry support and engagement. • Industry training. • Product development. |
| Office of the NSW Cross-Border Commissioner | The Office of the Cross Border Commissioner advocates and represents cross border communities and businesses. The NSW Cross-Border Commissioner works alongside local, state and federal bodies to ensure cross-border communities and businesses are not negatively impacted by two sets of legislations and policies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy. • Industry support. |
| Victoria's Cross Border Commissioner | Victoria's Cross Border Commissioner works with residents, businesses and community organisations along Victoria's border to identify and advocate for change. The Cross Border Commissioner also works with the Office of the NSW Cross-Border Commissioner to ensure economic and community benefits for border towns. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy. • Industry support. |
| Department of Regional NSW | The Department of Regional NSW is a central agency for regional issues, building regional economies and communities, managing the use of regional land, and ensuring that government investment into regional NSW is fair and delivers positive outcomes for local communities and businesses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Economic Development Plans. • Regional Event funding. • Tourism Infrastructure Funding. • Regional Investment support. • Regional strategic planning. |

| Organisation | Overview | Activities |
|---|---|---|
| Murray Regional Tourism | <p>The Regional Tourism Board and peak tourism organisation for the Murray region in NSW and Victoria.</p> <p>MRT is the lead cross boarder entity for strategic planning in the Murray region and collaborates with government and industry partners to undertake planning, marketing, product, industry and infrastructure development, and advocacy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination marketing. • Industry support and engagement. • Product development. • Investment attraction and facilitation. |
| Destination Riverina Murray | <p>DRM is one of seven Destination Networks (DNs) established by the NSW state government to represent the visitor economy in regional NSW. Its principal role is to represent and coordinate the growth and development of the NSW Riverina Murray visitor economy.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy. • Industry training. • Product development. • Industry support and engagement. • Investment attraction and facilitation. |
| Local Government <i>Campaspe Shire and Murray River Councils</i> | <p>Councils act as enabler for the visitor economy by providing the foundations, including strategic planning, infrastructure services, assistance in product development, investment attraction, and support to the local industry.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor services. • Destination marketing. • Investment attraction/facilitation. • Industry training. • Product development. |
| Echuca Moama and District Tourism Development Association Incorporated (EMT) | <p>EMT is the peak tourism organisation tourism for Echuca, Moama and the surrounding regions. The industry-based organisation provides leadership to ensure growth and development for the Echuca Moama tourism industry.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor information servicing. • Industry support and engagement. • Industry representation. • Destination marketing. • Event facilitation and support. |
| Echuca Moama Accommodation Association (EMAA) | <p>The EMAA is an industry-based organisation that represents accommodation providers located within the Echuca Moama region.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry networking. • Industry representation. |
| Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation (YYNAC) | <p>Established to represent, make decisions and act on any matters of significance to the Yorta Yorta peoples, and to enter into agreements with any person, Government agency or authority in relation to the protections of Yorta Yorta Country.</p> <p>Yorta Yorta Country is large area spanning a large part of northern Victoria and southern New South Wales, centred around the Murray River.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy. • Land management and protection. • Building capability, resources and education for Aboriginal people. |

| Organisation | Overview | Activities |
|---|--|--|
| Local Aboriginal Land Council <i>Cummeragunja</i> | <p>Local Aboriginal Land Councils represent Aboriginal affairs at a local level and aim to protect the interests and further the aspirations of Aboriginal communities.</p> <p>This includes working for the return of the culturally significant and economically viable land, pursuing cultural, social and economic independence for Aboriginal people and preserving Aboriginal land rights.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land acquisition. • Establishment of commercial enterprises and community benefit schemes. • Maintenance and enhancement of Aboriginal culture, identity and heritage. |

3. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The following section examines the challenges and opportunities for this destination, which have been identified through research and engagement with local visitor economy stakeholders, and review of Council documentation.

These considerations have been used to inform the recommended actions for this destination.

T4. CONSIDERATIONS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

| Markets |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a strong habitual market in Echuca-Moama, which is influenced by VFR and habitual visitation for market with holiday homes, caravans or who regularly camp in the area.• Echuca-Moama has a product mix well suited to the older demographic, including mostly passive experiences and attractions.• A need for products and experiences to attract the younger millennial market and higher value consumers.• Opportunity to engage regular travellers in new products and experiences and increase their yield.• Opportunity to increase mid-week visitation through attraction of education and business markets.• Opportunity to drive visitation from large regional centres, including Wagga Wagga and Griffith. |
| Product, Experience and Events |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conferencing is a major opportunity however there is a need for larger scale conferencing facilities.• Need for facilities to host business, education and sporting market midweek, including conferencing and events centre.• Food quality and price point is often too low – there is a need to lift the quality of the experience.• Opportunity to develop products and experiences , including agritourism experiences.• Need to activate the night time economy, particularly midweek.• Events struggling to reinvigorate after COVID.• High demand for bookable products and experiences for visitors to improve the experience of the region, particularly to experience the Murray River.• Opportunity to deliver products and experiences for the education market.• Market expectation to be able to have a nature-based experience that isn't currently available within the region. Need for improvement of National and State Parks.• Untapped First Nations stories and experiences. Opportunity to showcase the First Nations stories alongside post settlement experiences, whilst also giving space to the First Nations stories. |
| Accommodation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need for additional accommodation to grow the overnight visitor market. This includes high quality accommodation that meets visitor expectations, such as large-scale, contemporary hotels.• Opportunity to match quality accommodation and dining with high quality nature-based experiences available in the region.• Packaging together accommodation with other products and experiences. |

Infrastructure and Planning

- Echuca-Moama is one of the only towns nestled directly onto the River, however there is little ability to access or experience the River.
- The Murray River is a premium water destination however is highly congested, which impacts on the delivery of a high quality cruising and water-based experience for all visitors.
- Need to activate the river frontage, including increasing accessibility to the waterways through boat ramps, public pontoons and public temporary mooring points, as well as through private sector activations.
- Poor connectivity between walking and cycling paths and the Murray River.
- Lack of infrastructure for growing caravanning market, including parking and dump points.
- Disconnected rail system, particularly from Bendigo.
- No public temporary mooring available for visitors via the Murray River.
- Need to ensure the destination is equipped for inevitable climate change threats, including floods, droughts and bush fires.
- Lack of public transport options makes it difficult for visitors and the workforce to move between townships. There is need to explore public transport options such as a hop-on hop-off bus to connect townships, particularly within Echuca and Moama and between the two towns.

Brand, Marketing and Visitor Servicing

- Unable to meet demands of high visitation on weekends leading to poor quality visitor experience.
- Outdated and sparse visitor signage and wayfinding points.
- Unclear brand/identity for the destination, and confusion of brands (e.g. Echuca-Moama and River Country).
- Integrating the smaller towns to the overall brand of the region e.g. Bright and Surrounds.
- Unclear roles and responsibilities for tourism development and marketing.
- Increase digital presence of businesses to ensure visitors are aware of what is available in Echuca-Moama.
- Increase knowledge of local residents and businesses operators of available products and experiences within Echuca-Moama.
- Visitor confusion between the Visitor Information Centre and the Discovery Centre. There is a strong preference for the visitor information to be co-located with Discovery Centre.

Industry Development and Workforce

- Highly variable visitation makes it difficult to employ and retain the right number of staff (i.e. too many staff mid-week, not enough staff on weekends).
 - Labour shortages in terms of both skilled and unskilled workers. Need to attract backpackers to the region, encouraging them to work and play in the region.
 - Lack of accommodation and housing to support the attraction and retention of workforce.
 - Reliance on volunteers has major impact on events, particularly post covid change in volunteerism. Lack of volunteers to support events delivery, which impacts the viability and long term sustainability of events.
 - Succession planning and training to ensure the longevity of unique industries, i.e. paddle steam boats.
-

4. RECOMMENDED ACTION PLAN

READING THIS ACTION PLAN

Recommended actions have emerged as a result of consultation with industry and local government stakeholders during the Local Area Plan workshops, an assessment of existing local documents and strategies, and in response to considerations for tourism development.

The following provides a guide for interpreting the Recommended Action Plan.

Recommended Actions

Each of the recommended actions have been identified in response to the key considerations for tourism development in this destination, and aim to address visitor economy needs and opportunities over the next 5 years.

It is the role of key stakeholders to further investigate the viability and opportunity of each project.

Suggested Next Steps

The identified next steps are a suggestion to enable stakeholders to take forward the recommended actions.

The next steps are to be used as a guide, and will be informed by local resourcing and priorities.

Priority

The priority level for each of the recommended actions have been identified by determining their level of importance, logical staging, as well as which actions can be achieved relatively quickly.

The following priority levels have been used:

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Short-term within 1 year | Medium-term 1-3 years | Long-term 4-5 years + |
| Ongoing | | |

Key Partners

Key partners have been identified for each of the recommended actions. Current roles and responsibilities of these stakeholders are identified in the Destination Snapshot section of this document.

Key partners include:

- Murray Regional Tourism
- Destination Riverina Murray
- State and Federal Governments and agencies, including:
 - Regional Development Victoria
 - Department of Regional NSW
 - NSW Crown Lands
 - Goulburn Murray Water
 - Murray–Darling Basin Authority
 - Parks Victoria (Parks Vic)
 - NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services
 - VicRoads
 - Transport for NSW
 - Public Transport Victoria
- Local Government agencies, including:
 - Murray River Council (Murray River C)
 - Campaspe Shire Council (Campaspe Shire C)
- Echuca-Moama Tourism (EMT)
- Industry

4.1. PRODUCT, EXPERIENCE AND EVENTS

T5. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

| Recommended Action | Suggested Next Steps | Key Partners | Priority |
|--|--|--|------------|
| 5-Star Hotel and Conference Centre | | | |
| Conferencing facilities to attract the business and conference market supported by large high quality visitor accommodation. | - Unlock site opportunities and promote to key investment targets. | Industry Councils | Short term |
| Cruising Experience Investment | | | |
| Refer to the Murray Cruising Strategy for key project opportunities. Specific need include: | - Council and stakeholders to facilitate cruising investment. | MRT | Short term |
| - Water equipment hire locations | - Work with existing cruise operators to elevate offering and address barriers to operation. | DRM | |
| - Water taxi's | - Work with private operator to establish a paddle sports hub at Onion Patch. | Industry Councils | |
| - Paddle sports hubs | | GMW MDBA | |
| Murray Esplanade and Port of Echuca Activation | | | |
| Explore the way the Port of Echuca can be activated and provide a vibrant experience through activation of the Murray Esplanade pedestrian zone and commercial uses of the Wharf. This should build on the Echuca Creative Art Space Plan and Port of Echuca Masterplan, and consider: | - Campaspe Port Enterprise to work with Council to unlock activation opportunities. | Campaspe Shire C Campaspe Port Enterprise | Short term |
| - Public art activations | | | |
| - Piazza and outdoor dining in pedestrian zone | | | |
| - Public access and activation of wharf | | | |
| - Commercial leaseholds within Port and attract commercial operators | | | |
| Night-Time Economy Activation Plan | | | |
| Echuca-Moama is a well-developed destination however lacks a week-round, year-round night time economy. E.g. lighting, busking and live music at venues. | - Work with local industry to develop plan and activations. | Councils Industry | Short term |
| Waterfront Food, Drink and Entertainment Activation | | | |
| Support attraction of waterfront dining establishments to activate the riverfront and provide contemporary experiences. Opportunities include: | - Council should facilitate investment by identifying suitable sites, with consideration of suitable zoning / need for rezoning. | Councils | Short term |
| - Floating restaurant | - Promote the opportunity to a developer and facilitate planning process. | Property Owners | |
| - Waterfront dining | | Industry | |
| - Pop-up food and beverage on riverfront and Echuca Wharf | | | |

| Recommended Action | Suggested Next Steps | Key Partners | Priority |
|--|---|---|-----------------------------|
| <p>Bridge Art Project</p> <p>New gallery on Meninya Street and a raised walkway from the gallery to Dhungala, the Murray River, a distance of approximately 1km through riverine forest.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek funding for delivery if the Bridge Art Project concept. | <p>Bridge Art Project Committee</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>Industry</p> | <p>Short to medium term</p> |
| <p>Barmah Indigenous Experience Development Plan</p> <p>Support Traditional owners to develop unique indigenous cultural experiences at Barmah, building on the strength of the existing offering such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cruise and dining under the stars. - Cultural heritage tours integrated with on-land experience. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yorta Yorta to lead development of experiences in Barmah. | <p>Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation</p> | <p>Medium term</p> |
| <p>“On Farm” Experiences</p> <p>Promote local produce by supporting development of farm open days, on-farm experiences and farm gates, and paddock to plate dining experiences.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MRT to share agri-tourism research and recommendations with industry through further engagement with the sector. | <p>Local producers</p> <p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> | <p>Medium term</p> |
| <p>Murray Winter Night Time Events</p> <p>Delivery of signature, region-wide cultural events in the off-peak (i.e. winter). There is opportunity for this to be a unique sequence of events within the context of Australia, providing an accessible and contemporary back to nature experience, incorporating Aboriginal stories and experiences in the unique Murray setting. The event direction needs to be set by MRT, and local event direction to be determined by Council's in collaboration with MRT and industry.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MRT to allocate funding to develop and promote event. - Councils to allocate funding to local event. - Work with Traditional Owners and private operators to develop the event concept and program. - Identify grant opportunities and seek funding from state government agencies to support the event. | <p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> <p>Industry</p> <p>Councils</p> | <p>Long term</p> |
| <p>Accommodation Investment</p> <p>Refer to the Murray Region Accommodation Study for project details to attract investment in the identified priority projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Luxury Resort on the Murray, Echuca - 5-Star Hotel and Conference Centre - Boutique Luxury Hotel, Echuca - Midscale Hotel, Echuca-Moama - Experiential Accommodation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council should facilitate investment by identifying suitable sites, with consideration of suitable zoning / need for rezoning. - Promote the opportunity to a developer and facilitate planning process. | <p>Industry</p> <p>Councils</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |
| <p>Murray River Adventure Trail</p> <p>Investment in the Murray River Adventure Trail is underway across the Murray region. Some stages have been funded, however there is further design and construction work required to deliver on stages 2 and 3 of the trail.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with MRT and relevant stakeholders to develop stage one of the Murray River Adventure Trail. | <p>Councils</p> <p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> <p>Parks Vic</p> <p>NPWS</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |

| Recommended Action | Suggested Next Steps | Key Partners | Priority |
|--|---|--|----------------|
| <p>Cycle Echuca-Moama</p> <p>Investigate opportunities to make the towns more cycle-friendly and encourage exploration of natural assets.</p> <p>This should include new and improved bike paths, cycle infrastructure (e.g. bike parking, cycle hubs, mechanic stations), bike hire (including e-bikes and/or e-scooters), promotion of cycle routes and experiences, and encouraging accommodation providers to have bikes/e-scooters for hire.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote opportunities and benefits to private sector. - Identify and deliver cycle infrastructure needs. | <p>Councils</p> <p>Industry</p> <p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> <p>Parks Vic</p> <p>NPWS</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |

4.2. INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING

T6. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

| Recommended Action | Suggested Next Steps | Key Partners | Priority |
|---|---|--|-------------|
| Meninya Street Masterplan Implementation Project | | | |
| The Meninya Street Masterplan will transform the Meninya Street thoroughfare into an innovative and sustainable precinct. | - Seek funding for delivery of Meninya Street Masterplan. | Murray River C | Short term |
| Echuca Aerodrome Upgrade | | | |
| Upgrade of Echuca Aerodrome to ensure it meets industry standards, remains operational and is sustainable long-term, whilst also creating jobs and catering for the growth in population, tourism and recreational aircraft users | - Delivery of the Echuca Aerodrome upgrade. | Campaspe Shire C | Short term |
| Access and Transport Advocacy | | | |
| Advocacy to State Government to improve reliability and consistency of train services from Melbourne and improve access to and between towns through a regular public transport service. | - Undertake population and visitation modelling to provide a strong case for upgrades. | PTV VicRoads Transport for NSW Councils | Medium term |
| Bridge to Bridge Masterplan | | | |
| Development of a cross-border masterplan that considers Echuca-Moama, the riverfront and the use of the Murray River as one destination. | - | | |
| - Riverfront shared trail. | - | | |
| - Streetscaping and landscaping. | - | | |
| - Riverfront lighting. | - | | |
| - Consistent signage and sculptural interventions. | - | | |
| - Governance and management of waterway activity including consideration of infrastructure required to improve water-based experience, such as marinas; moorings and safe boat parking. | - Councils to engage a consultant to prepare the masterplan, including an audit of existing water access points, and review of waterway operations. | Councils GMW MDBA | Medium term |
| Infrastructure Servicing | | | |
| Services infrastructure to allow new development and business investment, including: | - | | |
| - Address water pressure constraints for new development. | - | | |
| - Mobile network and coverage / NBN. | - | | |
| - Sewerage and water capacity where required. | - Work with servicing authorities to deliver required infrastructure. | Servicing authorities Councils | Medium term |

| Recommended Action | Suggested Next Steps | Key Partners | Priority |
|--|--|---|----------------|
| <p>Advocacy to Address Housing Crisis Continued advocacy to State and Federal Government to address housing crisis.</p> | <p>- MRT and Councils to work with regional stakeholders to quantify housing needs and delivery of programs to meet required demand.</p> | <p>MRT DRM RDV DRNSW Councils</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |

4.3. BRAND, MARKETING AND VISITOR SERVICING

T7. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

| Recommended Action | Suggested Next Steps | Key Partners | Priority |
|--|--|---|--------------------|
| <p>Bookable Product and Packaging</p> <p>There are limited online bookable products within this destination. This presents an opportunity to increase length of stay and improve visitor experience.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop bookable product and product packages including accommodation and dining packages. | <p>Industry</p> <p>Councils</p> | <p>Short term</p> |
| <p>Cross-Border Brand Strategy</p> <p>Review of the existing brands (Echuca-Moama, River Country, etc.) and development of a brand strategy that unifies the two.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a cross border brand strategy. | <p>EMT</p> <p>Councils</p> | <p>Short term</p> |
| <p>Cross-Border Marketing Plan</p> <p>Review current approaches to marketing and develop a new cross border marketing plan.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a cross border marketing plan. | <p>EMT</p> <p>Councils</p> | <p>Short term</p> |
| <p>Visitor Information Review and Delivery</p> <p>Undertake a visitor information and signage review across the two Councils, and prepare a strategy to deliver the following needs as one destination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signage (wayfinding and tourism). - Gateway enhancements and interventions. - Visitor information touchpoints throughout the visitor journey. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a visitor information services review. | <p>EMT</p> <p>Councils</p> | <p>Medium term</p> |
| <p>Murray Region Local Ambassador Project</p> <p>MRT to develop a region-wide program to encourage local knowledge of and local pride in the tourism industry. This should include ongoing initiatives that aim to educate local industry and residents about the product offering and events, including notification of new business, events and promotional activities to create engagement.</p> <p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incentive system for residents and industry to engage in tourism offerings and promote through social media. - MRT branded business swapcard system to encourage cross-business promotion and visitor information. - Local area tourism industry communication framework. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MRT to develop and deliver plan. - Councils to deliver actions at local level. | <p>MRT</p> <p>DRM</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>Industry</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |

4.4. INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE

T8. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

| Recommended Action | Suggested Next Steps | Key Partners | Priority |
|---|---|--|------------------------|
| Governance | | | |
| Deliver on the outcomes of the EMT governance review, with the aim of strengthening a cross-border approach to tourism development, marketing and industry development. | - Deliver governance outcomes. | EMT Councils Industry | Short term |
| Regional Workforce Pathways and Promotion Program | | | |
| MRT to develop and implement a framework that promotes the attractiveness of the tourism industry and attracts new workforce. The program should be twofold: | | MRT | |
| - Work in the Murray promotion to attract new tourism industry workforce (think Want To Work in Paradise promotion from Tourism Queensland). This should consider non-monetary incentives for new workers to the region. | - MRT to develop a regional workforce skills gap analysis and campaigns. | DRM Councils | Short term and Ongoing |
| - Development of pathways program to attract and retain staff, including: | - MRT to work with local Councils and other stakeholders (jobs boards, LLENs etc) to promote opportunities. | Secondary schools Higher education Employment networks | |
| o Attraction of secondary students. | | | |
| o Communication of clear progression pathways within and between business. | | | |
| o Encouraging use of staff sharing platform to provide consistency of work. | | | |
| Skills Development Plan | | | |
| Using the outcomes of the regional workforce gap analysis and feedback from industry, EMT should collaborate with TAFE's, LLEN's and higher education providers to deliver tailored and location-based industry training solutions. | - Undertake workshop with industry to identify specific skill and training needs. - Work with higher education providers to develop courses and course material. | Councils Industry EMT MRT DRM Higher education TAFEs | Short term and Ongoing |

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Regional Documents

- Murray Regional Tourism Annual Report 2019-20
- Murray Regional Tourism Strategic Plan 2021-24
- Murray Region Destination Management Plan 2018-2022
- Murray Region Cruising Strategy 2022
- Murray Region Accommodation Study 2022
- Murray Region Consumer Research 2022
- RDA Murray Strategic Plan 2019
- NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030
- Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan 2023-30
- Riverina Murray Accommodation Market Assessment 2019

Murray River Council

- Meninya Street South Masterplan Report 2019
- Moama Bridge Arts Precinct and Meninya Street Masterplan 2019
- Moama Murray River Access Plan 2012
- Murray River Council Waterfront Strategy Request for Quotation 2021
- Murray River Council Priority Projects 2021

Campaspe Shire Council

- Events Strategy 2019
- Echuca Creative Art Space Plan
- Port of Echuca Precinct Economic Study March 2021

