




Health & Planning Division
 26- 28 Adelaide Street
 PO Box 81
 WENTWORTH NSW 2648
 Tel: 03 5027 5027
 council@wentworth.nsw.gov.au



Planning Proposal Application
 Received **17 NOV 2016**

made under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
 Section 78A

Act/Off: Planning Copy/Rel
 P202/0

FEES & CHARGES rect#: 215384

Assessment No. P202/0 Receipt No. 215384 Date 17/11/2016

PP Lodgement Fee \$5,500 -

Job No: 1410-1159-0000

Would you like a copy of the receipt? Yes No

PART A - APPLICANT'S DETAILS

Name/s Des and Joyce Lush and Grand Junction Pty Ltd

Company Name (if applicable) _____

Postal Address P O Box 448, Wentworth NSW 2648

Contact No. 03 5027 2461 Alternate No. 0407 847 717

Email kathryn@grandjunction.com.au

Declaration

- I declare that all the information in the application and checklist is, to the best of my knowledge, true and correct.
- I understand that if the information is incomplete the application may be returned, delayed, rejected or more information may be requested.
- I acknowledge that if the information provided is misleading any approval granted 'may be void'.
- I have submitted all plans, form and documentation as outlined in the checklist in Part G.

Signature/s [Signature] Director Grand Junction P/L Des & Joyce Lush. Date 26/10/16

PART B - PROPERTY DETAILS

Lot / Section / DP Numbers can be found on the Rates Notice or Certificate of Title for the land.

Street No. _____ Street Name Sturt Highway

Town/Locality Mallee NSW Postcode 2738

Lot No/s 1 Section _____ DP No/s 1182353

PART C - PLANNING PROPOSAL PRE-LODGE

Has a Planning Proposal pre-lodgement meeting been conducted relating to this Planning Proposal? Yes No

Meeting Date 27 September 2016 Meeting No. N/A

Responsible Officer Ken Ross & Michele Bos

Note: A Planning Proposal pre-lodgement meeting is required prior to preparing and submitting a Planning Proposal. A copy of the Council correspondence in response to the meeting must also be provided with this application.

PART D – OWNER'S DETAILS

Details are the same as Part A – Applicant's Details (Note: All owners are still required to sign the form)

Name/s

Company Name (if applicable)

Postal Address

Contact No.

Alternate No.

Email

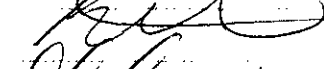
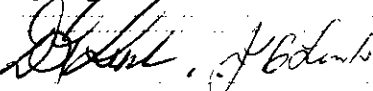
Do you agree to receive all correspondence via email? Yes No

As owner/s of the land to which this application relates to, I/we consent to carry out the development described in this application. I/we also authorise:

- Council representatives to enter the property for the purpose of site inspections;
- Council to make copies of all the documents for the purpose of determining the application or to people who may be affected by the proposal

Note:

- If more than one owner every owner must sign.
- If you are signing on the owner's behalf as their legal representative, you must state the nature of your legal authority and attach documentary evidence (e.g. power of attorney, executor, trustee, company director)
- If the owner is a company, a current ASIC extract must be supplied as documentary evidence and application must be signed by 2 directors.
- If the land is Crown Land, consent will be required from NSW Department of Primary Industry – Lands. Please refer to separate attachment Landowner's Consent: Landowner's consent application.

Name	Bob Wheelton, Sole Director Grand Junction PL	Signature		Date	26/10/16
Name	Des & Joyce Lush	Signature		Date	26/10/16

If more than two signatures are required please attach a separate document.

PART E – DISCLOSURE OF POLITICAL DONATIONS AND GIFTS

Under Section 147 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, any reportable political donations to a councillor and / or any gift to a Councillor or Council Employee within a two (2) year period before the date of this application must be publicly disclosed.

Are you aware of any person with a financial interest in this application who made a reportable donation or gift within the last two (2) years?

- Yes – Please complete the Political Donations and Gifts Disclosure Statement and lodge it with this application (available from the Council website)
- No – In signing this application I undertake to advise the Council in writing if I become aware of any person with a financial interest in this application who has made a political donation or has given a gift in the period from the date of lodgement of this application and the date of determination.

NOTE: Failure to disclose relevant information is an offence under the Act. It is also an offence to make a false disclosure statement.

PART F – PLANNING PROPOSAL DETAILS

PLANNING PROPOSAL TYPE

<input type="checkbox"/> Minor (No proposed changes to development standards and may include changing the wording of a clause or adding/removing a use from the land use table)	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor (Proposed rezoning and/or amendment of development standards for land with a site area less than 1 hectare)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major (Proposed rezoning and/or amendment of development standards for land with a site area of more than 1 hectare)
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Please tick all amendments to the Wentworth LEP 2011 proposed in the Planning Proposal:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zoning	<input type="checkbox"/> Floor Space Ratio (FSR)	<input type="checkbox"/> Heritage
<input type="checkbox"/> Height of Building	<input type="checkbox"/> Additional Permitted Uses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minimum Lot Size
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:		

Please provide a brief description of the proposed amendments to the Wentworth Local Environmental Plan 2011 (e.g. proposed zoning change, extent of proposed changes to development standards, etc.)

The specific elements of this planning proposal are to amend the Wentworth LEP 2011 to:

1. Include the B3 Commercial Core and B4 Mixed Use Zones
2. Rezone Lot 1 DP1182353 from RU1 to SP3, B3 and B4 to allow for tourism based development
3. Delete the Minimum Lot Size Map for Lot 1 DP1182353 given minimum lot size maps are not required for these zones

If applicable, please provide a brief description of the proposed development control plan provisions (e.g. description and scope of what the draft DCP aims to achieve):

1. To create a superior economic use of the site;
2. To create jobs in development and the ongoing operations of NORTHBANK;
3. To stimulate the wider Buronga Gol Gol areas through additional tourism and provision of services; and
4. Increased rate and water/sewer revenue for Wentworth Shire Council.

PART G – PLANNING PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

Matters for consideration are on a case by case basis. The Planning Proposal package must include, but not limited to, the information listed below depending on the complexity, nature, and context of the planning proposal.

Please ensure that you provide three (3) paper copies and one (1) electronic copy of all plans and documentation that is relevant to your application.

INFORMATION TO BE SUBMITTED		OFFICE USE ONLY
1) COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2) APPLICATION FEE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3) OWNERS CONSENT (all owners)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4) DESCRIPTION OF THE SUBJECT LAND/PROPERTY AND THE LOCALITY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5) COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE IN RESPONSE TO THE PLANNING PROPOSAL PRE-LODGEEMENT MEETING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
6) A PLANNING PROPOSAL REPORT which includes and addresses the mandatory components indicated in the <i>Guide to Preparing Planning Proposals and Guide to Preparing Local Environmental Plans</i> :	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
a) Objectives and intended outcomes of the planning proposal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
b) An explanation of the provisions that are to be included in the Wentworth Local Environment Plan (LEP) 2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
c) Justification and process for implementation for proposed amendments and outcomes (including compliance assessment against relevant Section 117 Ministerial Directions; justification that the proposal is the best means of achieving the desired outcomes; consideration of alternative options; and consideration of relevant state, regional, and local planning strategies)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
d) Draft amended LEP mapping of current and proposed statutory changes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
e) Proposed community consultation (including consultation with any relevant government agencies)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
f) Site Plan drawn to scale (with North point clearly shown) indicating physical features such as trees, topography, existing buildings, and all adjoining properties and/or buildings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
g) Detailed analysis of the site and surrounding locality identifying any relevant significant issues that need to be addressed in considering the planning proposal (e.g. site constraints and other development barriers)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
h) Photos/photomontage of the site and surrounding area	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
i) Relevant plans and concept drawings demonstrating the proposed amendments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
j) Explanation of any intended activities for the site if the planning proposal is successful and their potential impacts on the surrounding area (e.g. traffic and parking, noise, solar access, privacy, etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
k) Details of substantial public benefit that would result from the planning proposal (e.g. public domain improvements, provision of public open space, community facilities, affordable housing, etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
l) Draft site-specific development control plan*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

* May be required/requested as determined by relevant planning authority

PART G – PLANNING PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST CONTINUED	OFFICE USE ONLY	
7) RELEVANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDIES which may include the following (depending on complexity of planning proposal and nature of issue)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
a) Urban Design Analysis (including building mass/shadow diagrams)*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
b) Development Yield Analysis (potential residential yield & employment generation)*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
c) Transport & Accessibility Study (including parking, pedestrian & traffic)*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
d) Commercial/Retail Viability Analysis/Economic Impact Report*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
e) Stormwater management*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
f) Flood Study*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
g) Site Contamination (in accordance with SEPP 55)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
h) Bushfire Hazard*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
i) Water Quality*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
j) Flora and Fauna*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
k) Acid Sulphate Soil*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
l) Heritage Impact*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
m) Acoustic Report*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
n) Other relevant miscellaneous studies*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

* May be required/requested as determined by relevant planning authority

NORTHBANK ON MURRAY

17th November 2016

Wentworth Shire Council
Attn. Ken Ross

Ken,

We'd like to submit a Planning Proposal for Northbank on Murray. Also attached is the Planning Proposal Application form the SEPP & S117 checklists, fees, as well as Council correspondence suggesting the Planning Proposal be put before the General Purpose Committee on December 5th.

We have met with Council on numerous occasions and adhered to suggestions regarding appropriate zoning and also have had initial consultation with RMS.

We hope that Council will support this fantastic opportunity for the Wentworth Shire. A project of this magnitude would certainly put WSC on the map for tourism, economic development and ongoing employment opportunities for local individuals and businesses.

We look forward to presenting our Proposal to Council. If more detail is required before this time, please don't hesitate to make contact with us.

Regards,



Kathryn Baird
Grand Junction Pty Ltd
M. 0407 847 717
E. kathryn@grandjunction.com.au

Correspondence following
Pre-lodgement meetings.

From: **Michele Bos** Michele.Bos@wentworth.nsw.gov.au
Subject: RE: Northbank Planning Proposal
Date: 18 October 2016 3:24 pm
To: **Bob Wheeldon** bob@wheeldon.com.au, **Kathryn Baird** kathryn@grandjunction.com.au
Cc: **Ken Ross** Ken.Ross@wentworth.nsw.gov.au

Good afternoon Bob

Following receipt of the planning proposal, the process is as follows:

- An assessment of the report will be undertaken
- A report is prepared for the General Purposes Committee for their consideration and they make a recommendation to Council to either support/not support the proposal
- If supported, the resolution of Council together with planning proposal are submitted to the Department of Planning for a Gateway Determination

This is the standard process for all planning proposals received by Council.

I have discussed the assessment and reporting with Ken, particularly in light of our phone call last week, and he believes that the assessment should be outsourced and undertaken by an independent consultant. This will ensure that the proposal is seen through 'fresh eyes', will provide an objective and thorough assessment and may ensure that the assessment is completed in a more efficient timeframe.

If the Planning Proposal is received by Council within the month of October the following timeframe would be applicable. Having consideration to the content of this email in conjunction with the committee meeting cycle, it is estimated that the matter would be considered at the General Purposes Committee meeting on Monday 6 February 2017.

Therefore, on that basis, I suggest that once you are satisfied with the report, formally submit the planning proposal to Council together with the form and fee. Once submitted, the formal process of assessment, reporting and submission to DP&E can commence.

Should you have any questions regarding the contents of this email, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Michele Bos
Strategic Development Officer
Wentworth Shire Council
26 - 28 Adelaide Street | PO Box 81 WENTWORTH NSW 2648
P 03 5027 5027 | F 03 5027 5000 | [W www.wentworth.nsw.gov.au](http://www.wentworth.nsw.gov.au)

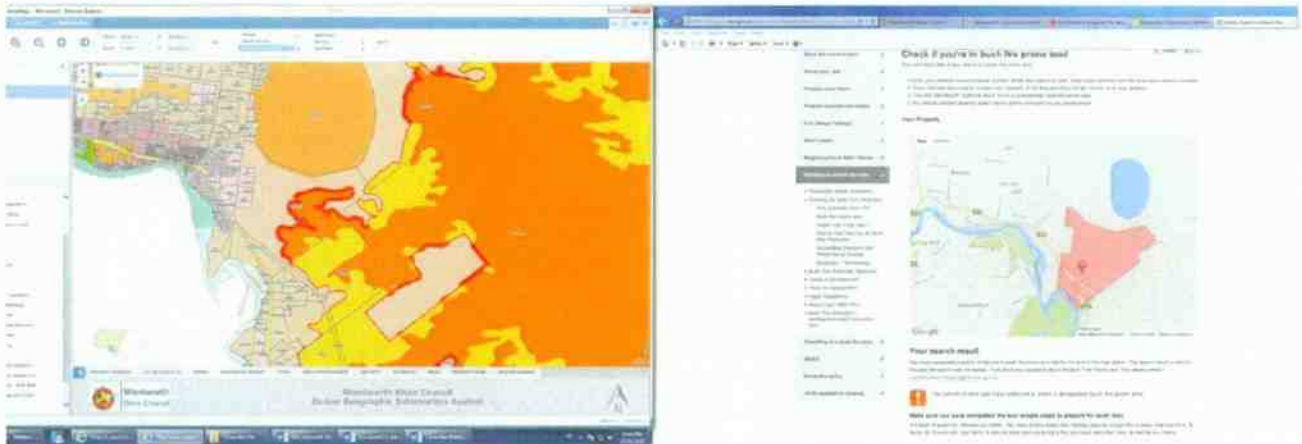
From: Bob Wheeldon [<mailto:bob@wheeldon.com.au>]
Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2016 3:28 PM
To: Michele Bos <Michele.Bos@wentworth.nsw.gov.au>
Cc: Kathryn Baird <kathryn@grandjunction.com.au>
Subject: Re: Comments on draft Northbank Planning Proposal

From: **Michele Bos** Michele.Bos@wentworth.nsw.gov.au
 Subject: RE: Comments on draft Northbank Planning Proposal
 Date: 11 October 2016 12:54 pm
 To: Bob Wheeldon bob@wheeldon.com.au, Kathryn Baird kathryn@grandjunction.com.au
 Cc: Ken Ross Ken.Ross@wentworth.nsw.gov.au

MB

Good morning Bob and Kathryn

As discussed, below is the map showing the extent of the bushfire prone hazard applicable to the Northbank land.



Also, as discussed, the reports for the October Ordinary Council meeting were closed last week.

Council is establishing a General Purpose Committee, with all Councillors on the committee, which will replace the PLC and other committees. This committee will meet monthly on the first Monday, with the first meeting held November 7. The deadline for reports close at the end of next week.

The logistics of receiving the Northbank planning proposal, undertaking an assessment and writing the report for the GPC by the end of next week does not seem realistic or manageable at the moment.

Therefore, could I propose that the report be put before the GPC in December, with you present at that meeting (it is open to the public) to support your proposal and my report? The date for that meeting would be 5 December.

Let me know what you decide.

Should you have any questions regarding the contents of this email, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Michele Bos
 Strategic Development Officer
 Wentworth Shire Council
 26 - 28 Adelaide Street | PO Box 81 WENTWORTH NSW 2648
 P 03 5027 5027 | F 03 5027 5000 | W www.wentworth.nsw.gov.au

Section 117 Direction	Applicable (Y/N)	Consistent (Y/N)	Comments/Justification
1. Employment and Resources			
1.1 Business and Industrial Zones	N		
1.2 Rural Zones	Y	N	But the inconsistency is viewed to be <i>minor</i> . Although the planning proposal does seek to rezone the land, currently RU1 Primary Production to SP3, B3 & B4, it is considered that in its <i>current state</i> , any loss of agricultural production value is minimal due to its low agricultural productivity. The land has been sitting dormant for a long time and not contributing to the local economy during this time.
1.3 Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries	N		
1.4 Oyster Aqua Culture	N		
1.5 Rural Lands	Y	Y	This s.117 direction applies because the planning proposal will affect land within an existing rural zone. The planning proposal is generally consistent with the Rural Planning Principles of SEPP (Rural Lands) 2008 as: a) The current use of the land for cultivation and grazing is of minor significance; b) The proposal will have minimal impact on agriculture in the area and will provide retail customers for farms, markets and cellardoors in the area; c) The proposal will provide a good balance between the social, economic and environmental interests of the community; d) The proposal avoids constrained areas and provides for the protection and ongoing management of land with important ecological values; e) The proposal provides additional tourism opportunities and is located adjacent to an existing township; and The proposal will make use of existing infrastructure and will have minimal demands for services because of its location.
2. Environment and Heritage			
2.1 Environment Protection Zones	Y	Y	The planning proposal includes provisions that facilitate the protection and conservation of the environmentally sensitive areas of the site.

2.2 Coastal Protection	N		
2.3 Heritage Conservation	Y	Y	The land has previously been examined by a local aboriginal elder who advised us that the site has no cultural heritage and no items have ever been found on the site. We attach a letter from the Aboriginal elder to this effect.
2.4 Recreation Vehicle Areas	Y	Y	The planning proposal will not enable the land to be developed for the purpose of a recreation vehicle area as the SP3 and RU1 Land Use Table are equivalent in this respect.
3. Housing, Infrastructure and Urban Development			
3.1 Residential Zones	N		
3.2 Caravan Parks and Manufactured Home estates	N		
3.3 Home Occupations	N		
3.4 Integrating Land Use and Transport	Y	Y	Existing access to the site is provided by all weather roads from the Sturt Highway. Works will be required to be undertaken to provide an all weather access and the design and construction of these accesses will require consultation with Roads & Maritime Services.
3.5 Development Near Licensed Aerodromes	N		
3.6 Shooting Ranges	N		
4. Hazard and Risk			
4.1 Acid Sulfate Soils	N		
4.2 Mine Subsidence and Unstable Land	N		
4.3 Flood Prone Land	N		
4.4 Planning for Bushfire Protection	Y	Y	The subject land is not bushfire prone land.
5. Regional Planning			
5.1 Implementation of Regional Strategies	Y	Y	The proposal is consistent with all applicable strategies. The Regional Strategy for Western NSW is yet to be completed.
5.2 Sydney Drinking Water Catchments	N		
5.3 Farmland of State and Regional Significance on the NSW Far North	N		

Coast			
5.4 Commercial and Retail Development along the Pacific Highway, North Coast	N		
5.5 Development in the vicinity of Ellalong, Paxton and Millfield (Cessnock LGA) (Revoked 18 June 2010)	N		
5.6 Sydney to Canberra Corridor (Revoked 10 July 2008)	N		
5.7 Central Coast (Revoked 10 July 2008)	N		
5.8 Second Sydney Airport: Badgerys Creek	N		
5.9 North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy	N		
6. Local Plan Making			
6.1 Approval and Referral Requirements	Y	Y	The planning proposal does not contain concurrence, consultation or referral provisions.
6.2 Reserving Land for Public Purposes	Y	Y	The planning proposal does not create, alter or reduce existing zoning or reservations of land for public purposes.
6.3 Site Specific Provisions	Y	Y	The planning proposal suggests a Development Control Plan to impose additional requirements in accordance with the relevant clause of the principle LEP.
7. Metropolitan Planning			
7.1 Implementation of the Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036	N		

State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP)	Applicable (Y/N)	Consistent (Y/N)	Comments/Justification
State Environmental Planning Policy No 1 – Development Standards	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy No 7a – Rural Lands Planning Principles (2008)	Y	Y	The planning proposal will promote the Buronga Gol Gol area as a tourism location and will bring tourists to the area boosting the local agricultural activities of the Sunraysia area through food tourism. Cellar doors, markets and other local food producers will be supported.
State Environmental Planning Policy No 7b – Rural Lands Planning Principles (2008)	Y	Y	The planning proposal does not decrease the agricultural production value of the land due to the current minimal agricultural productivity of the subject land. In addition the productivity of surrounding land, including adjacent land owned by the owners will be increased through food tourism opportunities.
State Environmental Planning Policy No 7c – Rural Lands Planning Principles (2008)	Y	Y	The planning proposal provides an opportunity for diverse economic activity, social, economic and environmental benefits for the local community. By promoting food tourism and local jobs the community will benefit economically. The local community will also benefit through improved amenities.
State Environmental Planning Policy No 7d – Rural Lands Planning Principles (2008)	Y	Y	The Planning Proposal will provide economic and consumer linkages to surrounding farms and vineyards. Tourists will be able to support other local businesses by directly buying at surrounding farms, farmers markets and cellar doors. The Planning Proposal has environmental benefits by promoting non-car transport.
State Environmental Planning Policy No 7e – Rural Lands Planning Principles (2008)	Y	Y	The land is already either substantially cleared of native vegetation or approved for clearing. Biodiversity impacts of this clearing were previously considered by the Lower Murray Darling CMA and offsets provided. Water sensitive urban design principles will be incorporated in NORTHBANK.
State Environmental Planning Policy No 7f – Rural Lands Planning Principles (2008)	Y	Y	The planning proposal will provide shopping and entertainment services to neighbouring lands that are approved for rural living. This will attract new residents to the area and in turn will also boost the social and economic welfare for the region
State Environmental Planning Policy No 7g – Rural Lands Planning Principles (2008)	Y	Y	NORTHBANK is adjacent to key infrastructure being the Sturt Highway, Gol Gol Filtered Water Plant and Buronga Gol Gol Sewer System. High voltage powerlines run through the site. There is excess capacity in these services at present and the long term nature of the development allows significant time

			for planning of any infrastructure requirements.
State Environmental Planning Policy No 7h – Rural Lands Planning Principles (2008)	Y	Y	At present there is no approved regional strategy covering the area of Wentworth Shire. A Draft Murray Regional Strategy was prepared in 2009 but was never adopted by the Department of Planning. NSW has released Regional Growth Strategies for every region of NSW apart from the Far West region that includes Wentworth Shire. The Governments advocacy and support of “regional growth” suggests that NORTHBANK would be consistent.
State Environmental Planning Policy No 14 – Coastal Wetlands	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy No 19 – Bushland in Urban Areas	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy No 21 – Caravan Parks	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy No 26 – Littoral Rainforests	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy No 30 – Intensive Agriculture	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy No 33 – Hazardous Development	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy No 36 – Manufactured Home Estates	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy No 44 – Koala Habitat Protection	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy No 47 – Moore Park Showground	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy No 50 – Canal Estate Development	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy No 52 – Farm Dams and other works in Land and Water Management	N		

Plan Areas			
State Environmental Planning Policy No 55 – Remediation of Land	Y	Y	There is no evidence or history of the site being subject to contamination.
State Environmental Planning Policy No 62 – Sustainable Aquaculture	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy No 64 – Advertising and Signage	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy No 65 – Design Quality of residential Apartment Development	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy No 70 – Affordable Housing (Revised Schemes)	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy No 71 – Coastal Protection	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy (Building Sustainability Index: BASIX) 2004	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy (Kurnell Peninsula) 1989	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Development) 2005	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy	N		

(Mining, Petroleum Production and extractive Industries) 2007			
State Environmental Planning Policy (Miscellaneous Consent Provisions) 2007	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy (Penrith Lakes Scheme) 1989	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP 53 Transitional Provisions) 2011	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2008	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Drinking Water Catchment) 2011	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy (Three Ports) 2013	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy (Urban Renewal) 2010	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy (Western Sydney Employment Area) 2009	N		
State Environmental Planning Policy (Western Sydney Parklands) 2009	N		



PLANNING PROPOSAL

REZONING OF LOT 1 DP1182353 TO SP3 (TOURIST), B3 (COMMERCIAL CORE) AND B4 (MIXED USE) TO ALLOW FOR RESORT AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AT EAST GOL GOL

Owners:

Des and Joyce Lush and Grand Junction Pty Ltd

PO Box 448

Wentworth NSW 2648

NOVEMBER 2016 – AMENDED APRIL 2017

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 - 4.4 Environmental Considerations
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5. Community Consultation

Appendices

- A- Concept Masterplan for NORTHBANK
- B- Site Location Map
- C- Deposited Plan Land Map
- D- Proposed Lot Size Map
- E- Proposed Land Zoning Map
- F- Extracts from Tourism Strategies supporting rezoning
- G- Extracts from Planning Strategies supporting rezoning
- H- Wentworth LEP 2011 Flood Planning Area Maps
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Part 1 - Introduction

1.1 The Planning Proposal

This planning proposal is seeking to rezone land at East Gol Gol for a master planned tourism development, which is to be named “NORTHBANK”. It is intended that the development will create a new tourism attraction for the Wentworth Shire and Wentworth/Mildura Region, which will augment the town services and existing tourist attractions of Buronga Gol Gol by provision of retail, services and entertainment options for local residents.

The proposed tourism development is intended to consist of a range of accommodation options of a resort nature, cafés & restaurants, gymnasium, shopping outlets and indoor & outdoor attractions and activities. NORTHBANK is intended to provide for a wide range of tourism activities to cater for visitor interests in the one location. The intention is to work in harmony with existing and approved tourist attractions such as cellardoors, farmgates, tours and the proposed Jewel Markets.

While NORTHBANK will connect with the existing road network it is intended the master plan will contain an extensive and separated shared way network which will allow golf buggy, bike and walking trails so that there is car free access around the site.

Appendix A shows the NORTHBANK Master plan and illustrates the nature of land uses that may be developed over time. The Planning Proposal seeks strategic support for the Northbank land being developed for tourism purposes over time rather than for any specific development, which would be the subject of separate later application.

The rezoning of this land will assist in fulfilling the demand identified in many local, regional and state strategic plans that see tourism and the river as underdeveloped assets in the area. There is presently no land in the Buronga / Gol Gol area with the SP3, B3 or B4 zonings.

1.2 Site & Locality

Land	Zone	Current Use	Proposed Use
Lot 1 DP1182353	RU1 Primary Production	Dryland farming and grazing	Tourist Development

The Site Location Map is attached as Appendix B.

The site is located approximately 1km west of the township of Gol Gol and 1.8km west of the proposed Jewel Markets. The Sturt Highway runs through the southern portion of the site and which allows road access to be facilitated in compliance with RMS requirements.

Immediately to the south is the Murray River. There is a small billabong adjoining the river that forms part of the proposed development site and is a private billabong.

NORTHBANK

ON MURRAY

The whole western boundary of the site has been rezoned for large lot residential development, most notably RiverBend Estate which is located on the southern side of the Sturt Highway.

To the North East of the site there is a mix of horticulture & agriculture properties comprising of dryland farming and irrigated vineyards and the site also adjoins the currently degraded Gol Gol Wetland. Adjoining the site to the northwest are lots 2, 3 & 4 of DP1182353, which have the same ownership and are currently used for dryland farming and grazing purposes.

Protruding into the southeast corner of the site is a vineyard owned by the Gol Gol School Trust. Other properties of interest close by are the Trentham Estate Winery and also a newly proposed Truck Stop and RV Park at the site of the current Trentham Caravan park, both of which this proposal will compliment.

Part 2 - Objectives or Intended Outcomes

The specific elements of this planning proposal are to amend the Wentworth LEP 2011 to:

- Include the B3 Commercial Core and B4 Mixed Use Zones
- Rezone Lot 1 DP1182353 from RU1 to SP3, B3 and B4 to allow for tourism based development
- Delete the Minimum Lot Size Map for Lot 1 DP1182353 given minimum lot size maps are not required for these zones

In particular, the development will seek to incorporate:

- 4-5 star tourist accommodation including a variety of resort villas, serviced apartments and freestanding holiday homes;
- Cafés and restaurants;
- Tourist Shopping facilities that will also cater for the local market;
- Family fun and adventure activity options;
- Golf course, adventure and recreation activities; and
- Water sport facilities.

Intended outcomes of the planning proposal are:

- To create a superior economic use of the site;
- To create jobs in development and the ongoing operations of NORTHBANK;
- To stimulate the wider Buronga Gol Gol areas through additional tourism and provision of services; and
- Increased rate and water/sewer revenue for Wentworth Shire Council.

The proposal to seek to rezone the site to SP3, B3 and B4 is a result of extensive review of Regional and Local Tourism Plans which indicate there are gaps in the Wentworth/Mildura regions tourism offering.

The Draft Far West Plan was not released at the initial time of submission of the NorthBank Planning Proposal. The Draft Far West Plan does however fully endorse the Planning Proposal as Tourism is a key part of this strategy. Specifically, actions in the Draft Far West Plan consistent with Northbank are:

“5.2 Prepare a tourism growth strategy serving peak and off-peak markets

5.3 Identify opportunities for tourism and associated land uses in local plans”.

Buronga Gol Gol's retail and entertainment offerings are limited and fragmented with neighborhood shops at Buronga, a service station with a mini IGA outlet and a basic general store in Gol Gol. While this retail offering may grow over time it is likely it will remain fragmented, as there is no location of sufficient size to cater for the retail space and parking required for a regional shopping facility.

With the addition of tourism demand, Buronga Gol Gol will have the population to warrant it's own retail/commercial shopping precinct that will serve the tourists and existing residents and future residents. NORTHBANK can provide a destination of sufficient scale and size to allow a larger range of retail and entertainment offerings to augment to existing neighborhood offerings.

Another objective of NORTHBANK is to reduce "escape spending", ie. Dollars of NSW money being spent in Victoria. For the majority the residents of Gol Gol & Buronga retail and entertainment needs and wants are serviced in Mildura, Victoria. What this equates to is millions of dollars heading over the bridge into Victoria every month with little of that money returning to NSW.

Part 3 - Explanation of the Provisions

The proposed outcome will be achieved through amending the Wentworth Shire Local Environment Plan 2011 as follows:

- To include the B3 Commercial Core and B4 Mixed Use Zones with the Land Use Table detailed below
- Rezoning of subject land from RU1 to SP3, B3 and B4 as per the attached Zoning Map;
- Delete the Minimum Lot Size Map for Lot 1 DP1182353

The current Land Use Table in the Wentworth LEP 2011 for SP3 Tourist is detailed below:

Zone SP3 Tourist

1 Objectives of zone

- To provide for a variety of tourist-oriented development and related uses.

2 Permitted without consent

Environmental protection works; Home occupations; Roads

3 Permitted with consent

Airstrips; Amusement centres; Animal boarding or training establishments; Boarding houses; Boat launching ramps; Boat sheds; Camping grounds; Caravan parks; Cellar door premises; Charter and tourism boating facilities; Child care centres; Community Facilities; Eco Tourist Facilities; Electricity generating works; Emergency services facilities; Entertainment facilities; Environmental facilities; Food and drink premises; Function centres; Helipads; Highway service centres; Home-based child care; Home businesses;

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Home industries; Information and education facilities; Jetties; Kiosks; Marinas; Mooring pens; Moorings; Neighborhood shops; Passenger transport facilities; Recreation areas; Recreation facilities (indoor); Recreation facilities (major); Recreation facilities (outdoor); Registered clubs; Respite day care centres; Restricted premises; Roadside stalls; Service stations; Shop top housing; Signage; Tourist and visitor accommodation; Veterinary hospitals; Viticulture; Water recreation structures; Water recycling facilities; Water supply systems

4 Prohibited

Any development not specified in item 2 or 3.

The proposed Land Use Tables for the B3 and B4 Zones in the Wentworth LEP 2011 are detailed below:

Zone B4 MIXED USE

1. Objectives of zone

- To provide a mixture of compatible land uses.
- To integrate suitable business, office, residential, retail and other development in accessible locations so as to maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling.
- To promote, where possible, the retention and reuse of heritage items as well as the retention of established buildings that contribute positively to the heritage or cultural values of the land in the zone.
- To promote development that supports tourism and residential development in the Wentworth Shire.
-

2. Permitted without consent

Environmental protection works; Home-based child care; Home occupations

3. Permitted with consent

Boarding houses; Child care centres; Commercial premises; Community facilities; Educational establishments; Entertainment facilities; Function centres; Home industries; Hotel or motel accommodation; Information and education facilities; Medical centres; Passenger transport facilities; Recreation facilities (indoor); Registered clubs; Residential accommodation; Respite day care centres; Restricted premises; Roads; Seniors housing; Shop top housing; Any other development not specified in item 2 or 4

4. Prohibited

Agriculture; Air transport facilities; Airstrips; Amusement centres; Animal boarding or training establishments; Boat building and repair facilities; Boat launching ramps; Boat sheds; Camping grounds; Caravan parks; Cemeteries; Charter and tourism boating facilities; Correctional centres; Crematoria; Eco-tourist facilities; Exhibition homes; Exhibition villages; Extractive industries; Forestry; Freight

transport facilities; Heavy industrial storage establishments; Helipads; Highway service centres; Home occupations (sex services); Industrial retail outlets; Industrial training facilities; Industries; Jetties; Marinas; Mooring pens; Moorings; Open cut mining; Recreation facilities (major); Research stations; Resource recovery facilities; Rural industries; Rural workers' dwellings; Sex services premises; Storage premises; Transport depots; Truck depots; Warehouse or distribution centres; Waste disposal facilities; Water recreation structures

Zone B3 COMMERCIAL CORE

1. Objectives of zone

- To provide a wide range of retail, business, office, entertainment, community and other suitable land uses that serve the needs of the local and wider community.
- To encourage appropriate employment opportunities in accessible locations.
- To maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling.
- To promote development that supports tourism and residential development in the Wentworth Shire.

2. Permitted without consent

Environmental Protection works; Home-based child care; Home Occupations

3. Permitted with consent

Boarding houses; Child care centres; Commercial premises; Community facilities; Dwelling houses; Educational establishments; Entertainment facilities; Function centres; Group homes; Home industries; Hotel or motel accommodation; Information and education facilities; Medical centres; Passenger transport facilities; Recreation facilities (indoor); Registered clubs; Respite day care centres; Restricted premises; Roads; Secondary dwellings; Shop top housing; Tourist and visitor accommodation; Any other development not specified in item 2 or 4

4. Prohibited

Agriculture; Air transport facilities; Airstrips; Animal boarding or training establishments; Biosolids treatment facilities; Boat building and repair facilities; Boat launching ramps; Boat sheds; Camping grounds; Caravan parks; Cemeteries; Charter and tourism boating facilities; Correctional centres; Crematoria; Depots; Eco-tourist facilities; Exhibition homes; Exhibition villages; Extractive industries; Farm stay accommodation; Forestry; Freight transport facilities; Heavy industrial storage establishments; Helipads; Highway service centres; Home occupations (sex services); Industrial retail outlets; Industrial training facilities; Industries; Jetties; Marinas; Mooring pens; Moorings; Mortuaries; Open cut mining; Recreation facilities (major); Research stations; Residential accommodation; Resource recovery facilities; Rural industries; Sewage treatment plants; Sex services premises; Storage premises; Transport depots; Truck depots; Vehicle body repair workshops; Vehicle repair stations; Vehicle sales or hire premises; Veterinary hospitals; Warehouse or distribution centres; Waste disposal facilities; Water recreation structures; Water recycling facilities; Water supply systems; Wholesale supplies

Part 4 - Justification

Section 1 – Need for the planning proposal

1. Is the planning proposal a result of any strategic study or report?

While the planning proposal is not the result of a property specific strategic study or report, the Planning Proposal is supported by a wide range of Planning and Tourism Strategies, which are detailed later in this Planning Proposal.

The Draft Far West Plan was not released at the initial time of submission of the NorthBank Planning Proposal. The Draft Far West Plan does however fully endorse the Planning Proposal as Tourism is a key part of this strategy. Specifically, actions in the Draft Far West Plan consistent with Northbank are:

“5.2 Prepare a tourism growth strategy serving peak and off-peak markets
5.3 Identify opportunities for tourism and associated land uses in local plans”.

2. Is the planning proposal the best means of achieving the objectives or intended outcomes, or is there a better way?

Yes, the flexibility of the SP3 Tourist zoning, along with the B3 Commercial Core and B4 Mixed Use zoning is the best way to achieve the intended outcomes. The proposed development site is currently zoned RU1 under the Wentworth Local Environmental Plan 2011, which zoning supports some tourism activities but does allow for an extensive tourism development such as Tourism and Visitor Accommodation. A change of zone is deemed the most appropriate course of action.

It will be necessary to have flexibility to subdivide the site, as all elements of the NORTHBANK concept will not be economically viable initially so the development will need to be staged. This can be achieved by either removing the minimum lot size maps for the site (the approach the Wentworth LEP uses for the Shire’s Village areas) or to set a minimum lot size of say 500sqm. This Planning Proposal uses the former approach but either approach would work.

NORTHBANK submits that while it is necessary that development be staged, it is essential that the zoning not be staged so as to allow for strategic planning of the whole site for tourism related uses.

3. Is there a net community benefit?

It is considered that there will be a considerable net benefit to the community. The Planning Proposal will benefit not only the immediate Buronga Gol Gol community but in turn the wider Wentworth Shire and broader Sunraysia Community as well. Given the overall development will be staged over a long period of 20+ years, the region will have sustained employment opportunities in the construction. This is of particular importance as the Buronga/Gol Gol area is the principal growth precinct in the

Wentworth LGA and will provide jobs to support residential growth. Not only will the project boost population growth but also will ensure sustainability of that growth and resident population.

With the proposed Trentham Cliffs RV Park development at Trentham Cliffs, NORTHBANK and Trentham Cliffs would compliment each other while not competing against each other. This will draw more tourists to the Wentworth and Mildura region due to the choice of accommodation and activities. This diversity of accommodation will then have a flow on benefit for all tourism related businesses in the region.

Use of the site for non-intensive sheep grazing and cultivation is less viable due to the fact that it is located immediately adjacent to Gol Gol and proposed large lot residential estates. The current use generates minimal income for the current owners and no material flow on benefits for surrounding businesses. Use of the site for tourism will in the medium term generate tens of millions of dollars investment in the district, create hundreds of jobs and bring increased visitor numbers and revenue to the district and surrounding businesses.

The Planning Proposal will:

- assist in meeting identified tourism short falls and gaps in the district and greater region as outlined by various strategic plans;
- enhance the viability of existing local businesses and support future local business opportunities;
- generate additional rates and water/sewer service revenue for the Wentworth Shire Council;
- provide substantial shopping facilities and infrastructure for use by Buronga Gol Gol Residents; and
- promote Gol Gol, Sunraysia and Wentworth council as “go to” destinations for tourists.

Section 2 – Relationship to strategic planning framework

4. Is the planning proposal consistent with the objectives and actions contained within the applicable regional or sub-regional strategy?

The planning proposal is consistent with the aims and objectives of the following strategic documents (Appendices F & G) that are relevant to Wentworth Shire Council and its community:

Wentworth Region Community Strategic Plan 2013-2023

The Wentworth Region Community Strategic Plan 2013-2023 is structured into 3 Key “Visions”. Vision 1 (Page 14) “*We want to be a vibrant, growing and thriving community*”, Vision 2 (Page 18) “*We want to strengthen the natural and built environment*” and Vision 3 (Page 22) “*We want enhanced community and civic leadership*”. In particular on page 16, “*1.0 - Increased economic development and growth*” is of particular relevance and in more detail the sub-points “*1.1 – Cultivate and develop a strong and vibrant tourism industry*”,

“1.2 – Identify new opportunities and actively encourage increased investment into industries such as tourism”.

The proposal is consistent with the vision outlined in the Community Strategic Plan by facilitating the development of and investment in the tourism industry and business, using the most efficient process to allow the development to proceed and will provide employment opportunities during the construction and operational phase of the development.

Wentworth Shire Council Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016

When reviewing the above strategy document, section 1.4 looks at “Key Actions” for the council. In particular, action point 1.4.1 on page 3 looks at “*Tourism and Promotion of the Region*” The strategy as stated is to “*Promote the region and grow tourism*”.

The planning proposal is consistent with the strategy as it seeks to provide an opportunity for a local landowner to develop an extensive tourism facility that will assist in drawing more tourists to the Wentworth Council area, as well as the Sunraysia region and provide a range of experiences for tourists with a Murray River aspect.

The strategy supports the growth of small business, of which this planning proposal seeks to achieve permissibility for a range of commercial tourism enterprises.

The proposal will also provide a net community benefit through ongoing employment opportunities in the retail and building trades, both during the construction and operational phase.

The Regional Development Australia Murray Regional Plan 2013-2016

The RDA Murray Regional Plan 2013-2016 states on Page 18 that ‘*There are obvious sub-regional distinctions between various economic activities. The Western part of the region has a strong emphasis on fruit, nut, vegetable and wine production*’. On page 21 the report also states that “*The region is primarily a holiday and leisure market with more than half of all tourists visiting the area for this reason. The natural Beauty of the region is a key driver with the Murray River a major attraction*”, and ‘*A significant proportion of visitor expenditure is likely to be spent on retail, accommodation and food service businesses, thus boosting these small scale businesses in the region.*’ Relevant Key Tourism Opportunities listed on page 21 of the report include:

- Invest and enhance golf infrastructure
- Encourage and develop quality dining at key tourist destinations and regional centres, with a focus on providing opportunities for riverfront dining
- Development of large and iconic festivals and events, particularly at key accommodation nodes, that have synergies with the product strengths of the region and destination
- Development of conference infrastructure

- Diversify the accommodation base across the region – need for more self contained apartments, higher quality backpackers, high quality branded accommodation at primary tourism nodes

Located in the south west corner of New South Wales, economic drivers for the Sunraysia region are irrigated horticulture, dry land agriculture and tourism driven by the popularity of the Murray River and the mild Mediterranean climate.

The planning proposal is consistent with this plan as it seeks to expand and improve the existing tourism facilities which will inevitably contribute to and compete with the range of accommodation and activities currently provided on both sides of the Murray River.

Economic Development Strategy for Regional NSW January 2015

On Page 4 of the document in the Executive Summary section, the Strategy identifies five goals to enable economic growth:

- Promote key regional sectors and regional competitiveness
- Drive regional employment and regional business growth
- Invest in economic infrastructure and connectivity
- Maximise government efficiency and enhance regional governance
- Improve information sharing and build the evidence base

The planning proposal is consistent with this strategy as it will provide local employment opportunities and business growth in the municipality, while contributing to growing the number of tourists coming to the local region.

Mildura Destination Management Plan – Discussion Paper

Page 8 of The Mildura Destination Management Plan discussion paper outlines the “*Specific issues that a Mildura Destination Management Plan should address*” and states “*Identification of Game Changing Projects which will help invigorate the Mildura visitor economy and provide new motivators for visitation*”. We believe that the vision that is held for the site once rezoned to SP3 Tourist will indeed be a “Game Changing Project”.

The second dot point on page 8 of the discussion paper also addresses another key need stating “*Better utilization of the Murray River as an asset: This includes consumer and visitor interaction; leisure, dining and accommodation facilities/activities as well as indigenous, cultural and heritage experiences that interact with the Murray River*”. The vision of the project is indeed to show case the Murray River whilst enhancing the aspects listed above with a plan to becoming the premier showcase attraction, not only in the Mildura region but the entire Murray Region.

Murray Region Tourism Board Strategic Plan 2015-2020

On page 5 of the plan in the Executive Summary section the Murray Region Tourism Board states “*Our key aim is to grow visitation by developing a quality visitor experience....*” and then on page 8 they outline “*Our Vision is to hold our rightful place as one of Australia’s*

most vibrant and iconic tourism destinations focused on the legendary Murray River.” On page 20, the report outlines a Key Performance measures as “Increase in investment in tourism assets and infrastructure measured by LGA area & Grow the economic contribution of the events sector by 10%”.

In their vision for the region by 2020 on page 24, they state the following:

- Increased visitation in the Murray Region by 4.5% from 5.46 million to 5.72 million.
- Increased employment contribution of the tourism sector by 1100 jobs and an increase in the overall percentage contribution of tourism jobs as a proportion of total employment in the Murray Region.
- Increased investment and participation by our public and private stakeholders.
- Continued improvement of the quality of our visitor experience by attracting investment in infrastructure developments that are visitor focused and inspired.
- Increased destination appeal by the delivery of authentic experiences.

The planning proposal is consistent with all the above stated visions by the MRTB. We believe that the site will allow the development of a major drawcard and feature attraction, which will bring people to the area just to experience our product but will also increase the benefits to all other tourist operators in the area as well as the overall economy. We anticipate creation of jobs by both the investment into development and construction, but also the ongoing operations of the tourist facilities located within the development.

The vision of the site is also drawn from gaps and opportunities identified within the MRTB Destination Management Plan, which responds to the need for new developments that are visitor focused and inspired.

Murray Region Tourism Board Destination Management Plan 2012

In the Executive Summary (page ii) section of the Murray Region Tourism Destination Management Plan they have identified several key aspects that should be focused on to enhance the economic viability of the area.

“The main theme to be taken out of the research is that the region should be promoting and developing the river further: the Murray River is the unique and defining attribute.” They also stated *“The second overarching theme identified in the research and consultation is the need for development of visitor activities at destinations throughout the region...”*

They also state in the Executive Summary under other key points that *“There has been a decline in visitation to the Murray over the past decade, particularly people aged 15-44;”* which suggests that families & young people are not catered for in the region. Further to this, they also state *“Visitation forecasts based on recent visitation trends and ABS population growth forecasts indicate limited growth over the next decade, unless investment in new tourism product is achieved.”*

Within their direct visitor research section of the executive summary (page ii) they state that *“The survey indicates that one of the factors in determining holiday destinations is the availability of low cost accommodation, which indicates support for the development of*

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backpackers and serviced apartments.” The management plan continues on **“Therefore, the emphasis on the development of both the National Parks and tourism opportunities on the river align with the results of the direct visitor research”** and **“The survey indicates that the development of food, wine, unique accommodation may attract visitors who have not travelled to the Murray Region before”**.

Of note on Page 4 of the DMP, they found that **“The Murray has large accommodation capacity, but there are many 3 to 3 ½ star motels that require refurbishment to retain market competitiveness;”** and then on page 5 they identify further opportunities as **“There is a need to reinvest in and establish a range of new tourism product across the Murray: many areas lack a range of visitor activities and many of the existing products are in need of a refresh. This was seen as a significant impact on the appeal of the Murray Region as a family destination”** and they also go onto note that **“The waterfront and the river has been underused and undersold to visitors, and presents the main opportunity for development, including improved visitor access;”** and **“There is a need to diversify the accommodation stock in the region, and there is demand for more accommodation on the riverfront.”**

The Destination Management Plan also identified that one of the key gaps and development opportunities are that of “Destination Development” which highlights the need to increase the range of product available in the region. Specifically they have identified: **“Improvement of river access infrastructure; designated safe swimming areas; Development of riverfront dining and accommodation; and a more diverse range of food and accommodation options.”**

The rezoning of this site to SP3 Tourist, B3 Commercial Core and B4 Mixed Use will allow a development to occur that will fill a number of the gaps identified by the Destination Management Plan. The vision has been based around the shortfall and gaps identified. The location of the site is perfect for tourism in that it is adjacent to a rapidly growing town and as such can both support and utilize existing and future infrastructure requirements, without impeding on the amenity of the town or reducing its capacity to develop further residential lots.

The Destination Management Plan states that without new tourism offerings the Murray region will not be able to reach its required projections to be viable contributors to the economy. The NORTHBANK site offers a unique opportunity to capitalize on so many of the gaps and opportunities identified.

The Draft Far West Plan

The Draft Far West Plan was not released at the initial time of submission of the NorthBank Planning Proposal. The Draft Far West Plan does however fully endorse the Planning Proposal as Tourism is a key part of this strategy. Specifically, actions in the Draft Far West Plan consistent with Northbank are:

“5.2 Prepare a tourism growth strategy serving peak and off-peak markets

5.3 Identify opportunities for tourism and associated land uses in local plans”.

Presently the Wentworth LEP 2011 identifies only one property (a former service station north of Wentworth) for tourism and associated land uses. Identifying the NORTHBANK site in the LEP for tourism and associated land uses will allow the strategic development of tourism in the Shire as intended by Action 5.3 of the Draft Far West Plan.

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NORTHBANK will also contribute to a future Council Strategy that is consistent with Action 5.2 of the Draft Far West Plan. NORTHBANK will provide a tourism hub for the Buronga Gol Gol area, which other tourism and associated services can benefit from. For example Mungo National Park tourism guides may use NORTHBANK as a base.

5. Is the planning proposal consistent with the local council's Community Strategic Plan, or other local strategic plan?

Yes – See above.

6. Is the proposal consistent with applicable state environmental planning policies?

Consistency with applicable State Environmental Planning Policies is indicated in the following table:

State Environmental Planning Policy	Consistency
<p>SEPP – No. 7a (Rural Lands) 2008</p> <p>Principles: The promotion and protection of opportunities for current and potential productive and sustainable economic activities in rural areas</p>	<p>The planning proposal will promote the Buronga Gol Gol area as a tourism location and will bring tourists to the area boosting the local agricultural activities of the Sunraysia area through food tourism. Cellar doors, markets and other local food producers will be supported.</p>
<p>SEPP – No. 7b (Rural Lands) 2008</p> <p>Principles: Recognition of the importance of rural lands and agriculture and the changing nature of agriculture and of trends, demands and issues in agriculture in the area, region or State</p>	<p>The planning proposal does not decrease the agricultural production value of the land due to the current minimal agricultural productivity of the subject land. In addition the productivity of surrounding land, including adjacent land owned by the owners will be increased through food tourism opportunities.</p>
<p>SEPP – No. 7c (Rural Lands) 2008</p> <p>Principles: Recognition of the significance of rural land uses to the State and rural communities, including the social and economic benefits of rural land use and development</p>	<p>The planning proposal provides an opportunity for diverse economic activity, social, economic and environmental benefits for the local community. By promoting food tourism and local jobs the community will benefit economically. The local community will also benefit through improved amenities.</p>
<p>SEPP – No. 7d (Rural Lands) 2008</p> <p>Principles: In planning for rural lands, to balance the social, economic and environmental interests of the community</p>	<p>The Planning Proposal will provide economic and consumer linkages to surrounding farms and vineyards. Tourists will be able to support other local businesses by directly buying at surrounding farms, farmers markets and cellar doors. The Planning Proposal has environmental benefits by promoting non-car transport.</p>
<p>SEPP – No. 7e (Rural Lands) 2008</p> <p>Principles: The identification and protection of natural resources, having regard to maintaining biodiversity, the protection of native vegetation, the importance of water resources and avoiding constrained land</p>	<p>The land is already either substantially cleared of native vegetation or approved for clearing. Biodiversity impacts of this clearing were previously considered by the Lower Murray Darling CMA and offsets provided. Water sensitive urban design principles will be incorporated in NORTHBANK.</p>

<p>SEPP – No. 7f (Rural Lands) 2008</p> <p>Principles: The provision of opportunities for rural lifestyle, settlement and housing that contribute to the social and economic welfare of rural communities</p>	<p>The planning proposal will provide shopping and entertainment services to neighbouring lands that are approved for rural living. This will attract new residents to the area and in turn will also boost the social and economic welfare for the region</p>
<p>SEPP – No. 7g (Rural Lands) 2008</p> <p>Principles: The consideration of impacts on services and infrastructure and appropriate location when providing for rural housing</p>	<p>NORTHBANK is adjacent to key infrastructure being the Sturt Highway, Gol Gol Filtered Water Plant and Buronga Gol Gol Sewer System. High voltage powerlines run through the site. There is excess capacity in these services at present and the long term nature of the development allows significant time for planning of any infrastructure requirements.</p>
<p>SEPP – No. 7h (Rural Lands) 2008</p> <p>Principles: Ensuring consistency with any applicable regional strategy of the Department of Planning or any applicable local strategy endorsed by the Director-General</p>	<p>At present there is no approved regional strategy covering the area of Wentworth Shire. A Draft Murray Regional Strategy was prepared in 2009 but was never adopted by the Department of Planning. NSW has released Regional Growth Strategies for every region of NSW apart from the Far West region that includes Wentworth Shire. The Governments advocacy and support of “regional growth” suggests that NORTHBANK would be consistent.</p>
<p>SEPP – No. 55 (Remediation of Land)</p> <p>Principles: This policy aims to promote the remediation of contaminated land to reduce the risk of harm to human health.</p>	<p>There is no evidence or history of the site being subject to contamination.</p>

7. Is the planning proposal consistent with applicable Ministerial Directions (s. 117 directions)?

Consistency with s.117 Directions is indicated in the following table.

s.117 Direction	Consistency
<p>1.2 Rural Zones</p> <p>Objectives: The objective of this S117 Ministerial Direction is to protect the agricultural production value of rural land.</p>	<p>No – but the inconsistency is viewed to be minor. Although the planning proposal does seek to rezone the land, currently RU1 Primary Production to SP3, B3 & B4, it is considered that in its current state, any loss of agricultural production value is minimal due to its low agricultural productivity. The land has been sitting dormant for a long time and not contributing to the local economy during this time.</p>

<p>1.5 Rural Lands</p> <p>Objectives: The objectives of this S117 Ministerial Direction for rural lands are to <i>protect the agricultural production value of rural land and facilitate the orderly and economic development of rural lands for rural and related purposes.</i></p>	<p>This s.117 direction applies because the planning proposal will affect land within an existing rural zone.</p> <p>The planning proposal is generally consistent with the Rural Planning Principles of SEPP (Rural Lands) 2008 as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The current use of the land for cultivation and grazing is of minor significance; b) The proposal will have minimal impact on agriculture in the area and will provide retail customers for farms, markets and cellar doors in the area; c) The proposal will provide a good balance between the social, economic and environmental interests of the community; d) The proposal avoids constrained areas and provides for the protection and ongoing management of land with important ecological values; e) The proposal provides additional tourism opportunities and is located adjacent to an existing township; and f) The proposal will make use of existing infrastructure and will have minimal demands for services because of its location.
<p>2.1 Environment Protection Zones</p>	<p>Consistent – the planning proposal includes provisions that facilitate the protection and conservation of the environmentally sensitive areas of the site.</p>
<p>2.3 Heritage Conservation</p>	<p>Consistent – The land has previously been examined by a local aboriginal elder who advised us that the site has no cultural heritage and no items have ever been found on the site. We attach a letter from the Aboriginal elder to this effect.</p>
<p>2.4 Recreation Vehicle Areas</p>	<p>Consistent – the planning proposal will not enable the land to be developed for the purpose of a recreation vehicle area as the SP3 and RU1 Land Use Table are equivalent in this respect.</p>
<p>3.4 Integrating Land Use and Transport</p> <p>Objectives: The objective of this direction is to improve access, increase choice of transport available, reduce car dependence, support public transport use and efficient movement of freight.</p>	<p>Consistent - Existing access to the site is provided by all weather roads from the Sturt Highway. Works will be required to be undertaken to provide an all weather access and the design and construction of these accesses will require consultation with Roads & Maritime Services.</p>
<p>4.4 Planning for Bushfire Protection</p>	<p>Consistent - The subject land is not bushfire prone land.</p>
<p>5.1 Implementation of Regional Strategies</p>	<p>Consistent – The proposal is consistent with all applicable strategies.</p>
<p>6.1 Approval and Referral</p>	<p>Consistent – The planning proposal does not contain</p>

Requirements	concurrence, consultation or referral provisions.
6.2 Reserving Land for Public Purpose	Consistent – the planning proposal does not create, alter or reduce existing zoning or reservations of land for public purposes.
6.3 Site Specific Provisions	Consistent – The planning proposal suggests a Development Control Plan to impose additional requirements in accordance with the relevant clause of the principle LEP.

Section 3 – Traffic and Transport Considerations

- **Local traffic and transport.** – Within the development itself the localized traffic system will have some vehicle traffic facilities for the commercial section of the site and minimal for the tourist section, but within the resort precinct itself, the main focus will be on walking and alternative movement such as golf buggy, scooter and other environmentally friendly forms of transport.
- **Public Transport.** – The Gol Gol township is connected to the public transport network via the bus transport system and given that the proposed development is on the fringe of the township, it is anticipated that the proposed new development will utilise this existing public transport network system.
- **Cycle and pedestrian movement.** – Within the development itself, one of the key elements that will be focused on is a standalone separate “Cycle & Pedestrian” movement network that is away from any traditional car movement network. This will help facilitate safety, but also adopt an environmentally conscious approach to developing a sustainable development.

Section 4 – Environmental Considerations.

- **Bushfire Hazard.** – While currently identified on RFS maps it is considered that there is no identifiable Bushfire Hazard on the proposed development site. The surrounding land is predominantly cleared or has a permit to be a cleared. When this approved clearing is in effected a Bushfire Hazard will not be applicable to this site.
- **Noise Impact.** – Although there will be an increase in noise, as any proposed development on vacant land currently used as farming, will have a higher level of noise on the site than that of farm animals. However it is not considered that the proposed development will have any noise impact that is detrimental to the area. The site will not be used for an industrial manufacturing purpose and what is proposed is consistent with the noise level being developed form the township of Gol Gol itself and as such, it is not felt that there is any undesirable Noise Impact level.
- **Flora and/or fauna.** – This is addressed in the section numbered 8 as detailed below. Clearing of the site has previously been approved based upon a Report of Sunraysia Environmental. It is also expected that a Flora & Fauna Management Plan would be created by a suitably qualified company as a condition of the Gateway Approval. The majority of the site is however either cleared or approved for clearing.

8. Is there any likelihood that critical habitats or threatened species, populations or ecological communities, or their habitats, will be adversely affected as a result of this proposal?

No for the detailed reasons below.

Native vegetation

The majority of the land has been approved for clearing already. A small (circa 10 acres) area of black box woodland is on the floodplain frontage to the Murray River and it is not proposed to clear this land as part of this Planning Proposal.

Threatened Species

The site is highly disturbed and the majority of the land has been approved for clearing/cultivation already (Appendix J). Due to past and current land uses (including ripping, grazing, camping, motorbike & 4WD use as well as Council approved gravel extraction), it is not expected to impact any species. A Statement of Environmental Effects was completed on this Lot in 2011 for approved DA11/014 – Gravel Quarry. It's also expected that a Flora & Fauna Management Plan would be required as a condition of the Gateway Approval.

Riverine corridor

The vegetation corridor along the Murray River will not be affected by the planning proposal. The Wentworth LEP 2011 protects the riverine corridor by prohibiting dwelling development within 40 metres from the river and restrictions upon any development close to the river. Any development to be constructed will need to comply with these prohibitions and restrictions.

- **Water Quality.** – The proposed development is not seen to pose any issues around water quality. The site is large enough to be able to facilitate the catchment and treatment of its own stormwater on site and any hard surface areas on the southern side of the highway would be design to facilitate catchment and treatment to ensure that no low quality water was to re-enter the river network system. As such, Water Quality is not seen as an issue of concern.
- **Stormwater Management.** – As mentioned above, the site is of such a size that it is large enough to catch and treat its own stormwater without it impacting neighboring properties or the river network. At the time of planning permit application for development it is acknowledged that a formal Stormwater Management Plan would need to be undertaken by a suitably qualified engineer and this will be provided at such time as appropriate for the development.
- **Flooding.** - The majority of the site is outside the Shire's Flood Planning Area. A small part (less than 5%) of the site adjacent to the Murray River and billabong is on the floodplain (Appendix H). Any development in this part of the site would have to be compatible with the NSW Floodplain Development Manual and the Wentworth LEP 2011.
- **Resources.** – The land is currently used as farming land with use as dryland cropping and grazing, however this is not considered its most economically viable use. The change of zones from farming to an alternative zone is not considered to be of any detrimental impact to the local agricultural environment. There has previous been a gravel pit on site where an external applicant was granted permission to mine the

site for gravel. This was unfortunately out of our control and not what we would have proposed for the site. We understand that the gravel supplies on the site have been exhausted and are no longer viable so the change of use of the site will not have any impact on that situation. The proposed development is located on the edge of the Gol Gol township and as such has access to fresh drinking water via the reticulated system supplying the Gol Gol township and it is anticipated that the proposed development will utilise this system. It is not proposed at this stage within the development to facilitate any fisheries facilities and as such this is not seen as an area of concern.

9. Are there any other likely environmental effects as a result of the planning proposal and how are they proposed to be managed?

Any particular site specific constraints associated with the development of tourism allowed by the rezoning would be addressed at the Development Application stage, when Council would consider Section 79C of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

The site is substantially already approved for clearing and any additional clearing would require separate approval.

While all human activity has environmental impacts it is likely that the concentration of tourism development in one location will significantly reduce environmental impacts. For example it is intended that the development will be designed so that minimal car transport is required by visitors after arrival.

Section 5 – Urban Design Considerations

- **Existing Site Plan (Buildings, vegetation, roads, etc).** – A plan has been provided along with aerial photography that illustrates the existing conditions within the site and also immediately surrounding the site.
- **Building mass/block diagram study (changes in building height and FSR).** – Obviously with the parcel of land not currently developed, any development will mean a change in building heights. A schematic plan has been developed for discussion and illustrative purposes that outlines the proposed building mass on the site and also provides an indication of the type of commercial development that is envisaged for the site. However it should be noted that the concept is still very much in its infancy at this stage and the focus is initially on the rezoning of the site before any detailed plans of proposed development can be entered into and discussed.
- **Lighting impact.** – Any change of use of land from farming which has basically no lighting impacts to a combination as proposed for this site, will create an increase in light emissions, however these are not considered to be of an adverse impact to the neighbouring community or land holders. The proposal is a mix of tourism, accommodation and commercial and will not emit any more light than is currently emitted from the existing townships of Gol Gol and Buronga and given that the proposed site is adjacent to the township of Gol Gol, it will simply be seen as an extension of the township and in keeping with the existing light emissions.

- **Development Yield analysis (potential yield of lots, houses, employment generation).** – As mentioned earlier, the initial plans are just conceptual of nature at this stage and detailed analysis of development yield has not yet been undertaken, however the concept plan does give an indication of the type of proposal envisaged. The employment from the proposed development will be of a major significance to the area, not only during construction, but also in the subsequent operations of the development. It is difficult to quantify exactly the numbers of employment as the development is anticipated to take 10-20 year to complete in its entirety, however, one can assume that the job creation will be in excess of 1000 plus jobs over the next several years.

Section 6 – Economic, Social and Cultural Considerations

- **Economic Impact Assessment.** – If required, NORTHBANK considers it appropriate that an Economic Impact and Retail Study be prepared as a condition of a Gateway Approval. NORTHBANK will create employment for the area through the influx of investment and tourism dollars that the proposed development will bring to the Gol Gol community and the Wentworth Shire Council. There are not perceived to be any negative economic impacts as a result of the proposed development.
- **Retail Centres Hierarchy.** – If required, NORTHBANK considers it appropriate that an Economic Impact and Retail Study be prepared as a condition of a Gateway Approval. NORTHBANK will create a new retail hub for the Buronga Gol Gol area. At present Buronga Gol Gol has a series of smaller local retail shops which will service local markets as Buronga Gol Gol grows. Such a Study should consider demand, retail catchment, escape spending, impacts of development of Buronga Gol Gol from the current limited provision of retail and services, also the traffic impacts of a growing Buronga Gol Gol community having to commute approximately 10 kilometres through to the 15th Street Mildura area for the majority of their shopping needs.
- **Employment Land.** – It is anticipated that approximately 40-60% of the overall site will intensively generate employment opportunities.
- **Heritage Impact.** – The site is not impacted by a heritage overlay and the proposed development will not have any impact on the local heritage aspect of Gol Gol or the wider community.
- **Aboriginal archeology.** - A Cultural Heritage Investigation of the site was carried out (Appendix I) by a now deceased Elder of the Barkinji People who advised that there were “no” significant sites found within the development site area. He further advised that the site was predominantly comprised of Mallee Vegetation which rarely has any significant sites. He also further noted that there was a significant portion of the site that had been interfered with by gravel extraction activities and also motorbike riding.
- **Open Space Management.** – The entire proposed development will be a self contained development and as such it is envisaged that all open space management will be undertaken by the developer or the developers appointed managers. It is not envisaged that this proposal will create any open space management issues for council to be required to undertake in the future.
- **European archeology.** – The Wentworth Shire Heritage Study did not identify any areas of historical significance located on the site and its primary use has been farming for the purposes of grazing and dryland cropping and as such it is considered not required to be addressed at this stage.

- **Social & Cultural impacts.** – This is covered in point 10 below.

10. How has the planning proposal adequately addressed any social and economic effects?

The Planning Proposal is likely to generate significant positive social and economic effects by creating a large increase in employment during both the construction phase and the operations phase of the development.

In addition to this, the project will become a major draw card for the region in terms of tourism and will see additional visitors coming to the area specifically to stay at and experience NORTHBANK. This will in turn have massive flow on benefits to Buronga Gol Gol and the rest of the Wentworth and Sunraysia region. It will enhance existing and local business opportunity within the community.

While a tourism project, the Planning Proposal will add to the existing retail and entertainment facilities of Buronga Gol Gol. Consequently it will assist making Buronga and Gol Gol a more attractive residential location for existing and new residents.

- **Stakeholder Engagement** – Various stakeholders such as council, RMS, potential tenant businesses and neighbors have been involved in preliminary discussions regarding the proposal with positive feedback and in principle support for the overall concept. It is recognised that the proposal will be of major economic benefit to the local community and the wider district but that extensive stakeholder engagement is required.
- **Agency referrals** – NORTHBANK suggests that agencies the Planning Proposal should be referred to as a condition of a Gateway Approval should include the Rural Fire Service, DPI Fisheries, Roads and Maritime Services, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and NSW Office of Water.

Section 7 – Infrastructure Considerations

Infrastructure servicing and potential funding arrangements. – See Below:

11. Is there adequate public infrastructure for the planning proposal?

Yes the subject land adjoins the existing township of Gol Gol which has ample public infrastructure including telecommunications, water, sewer and power lines. The site is serviced by sealed roads in the form of the Sturt Highway but it is intended to minimize access points to this highway to accord with RMS policy. High voltage electricity lines run through the site. The filtered water plant for Wentworth Shire is adjacent to the site. A short extension will be required to join the Buronga/Gol Gol sewer scheme.

12. What are the views of State and Commonwealth public authorities consulted in accordance with the gateway determination?

It is proposed to consult with State and Commonwealth authorities as part of the Gateway process. Given the site's frontage to the Sturt Highway close consultation

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ON MURRAY

with NSW Roads and Maritime will be required and a meeting with them has already taken place.

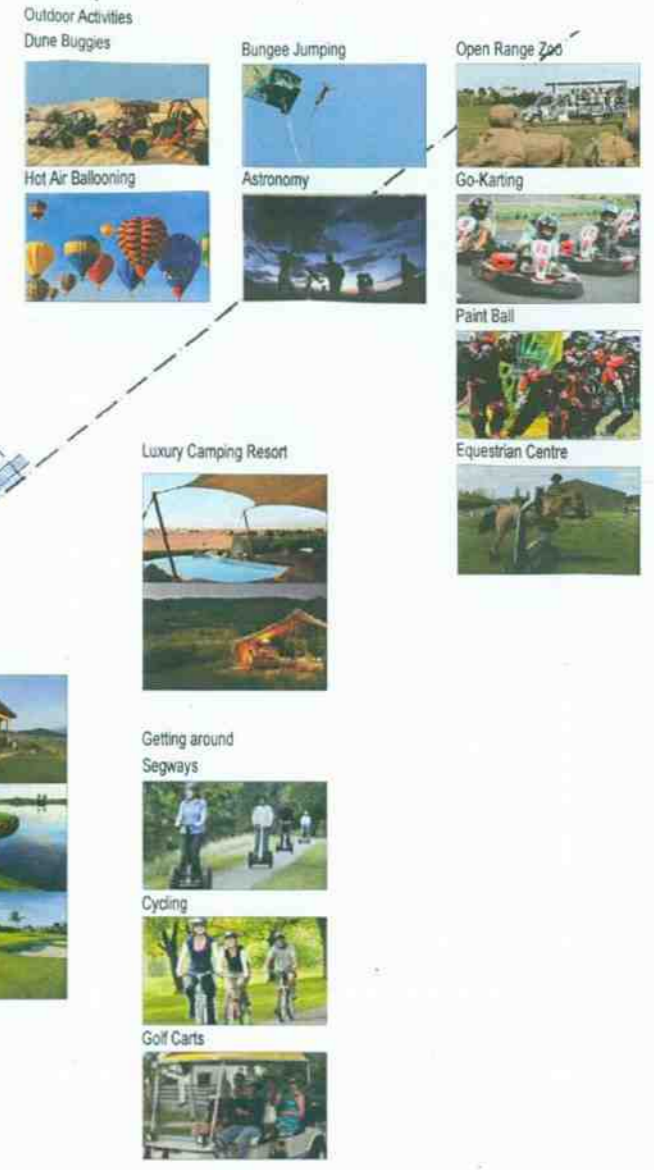
NORTHBANK suggests that agencies the Planning Proposal should be referred to as a condition of a Gateway Approval should include the Rural Fire Service, DPI Fisheries, Roads and Maritime Services, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and NSW Office of Water.

Part 5 – Community Consultation

Community consultation is proposed in accordance with Section 57 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

A 28 day consultation period is considered appropriate as per the Gateway Determinations for other similar Planning Proposals in the area.

Notification can be conducted by signage on site, local press notices and information on Wentworth Shire Council's website.



- Legend - South of Highway**
- 1 Southern Resort Entrance
 - 2 Murray Resort Hotel
 - 3 Tennis Village
 - 4 Hillside Apartments
 - 5 Boat Sheds
 - 6 Boat Ramp
 - 7 Gol Gol Ski Club
 - 8 House Boat Mooring
 - 9 Beach Swimming Lagoon
 - 10 "Board Walk" - Restaurants, Cafes & Boutique Shops
 - 11 River Lodges
 - 12 Picnic Sites/Viewing Platforms

- Indoor Activities**
- Trampolining
 - Bowling
 - Gymnasium
 - Multiscreen Cinema
 - Laser Tag
 - Indoor Rock Climbing
 - Roller Skating

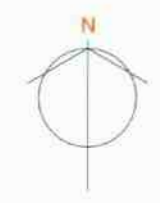
- Legend - North of Highway**
- A Northern Resort Entrance
 - B Large Scale Tourism - Retail
 - C Food Court
 - D Village "Square"-Boutique Shopping, Restaurants, Cafes, Boutique Brewery, Apartments etc.
 - E Lagoon/Beach Swimming
 - F Water Park - Resort Village
 - G Adventure Park
 - H Hotel/Spa
 - I Lake
 - J Golf Clubhouse & Resort
 - K 18 Hole Championship Golf Course
 - L Indigenous Cultural Centre & Conference Centre
 - M Resort Village 1 - Townhouses, Apartments etc.
 - N Resort Village 2 - Townhouses, Apartments etc.
 - O Resort Village 3 - Townhouses, Apartments etc.
 - P Individual Holiday Villas

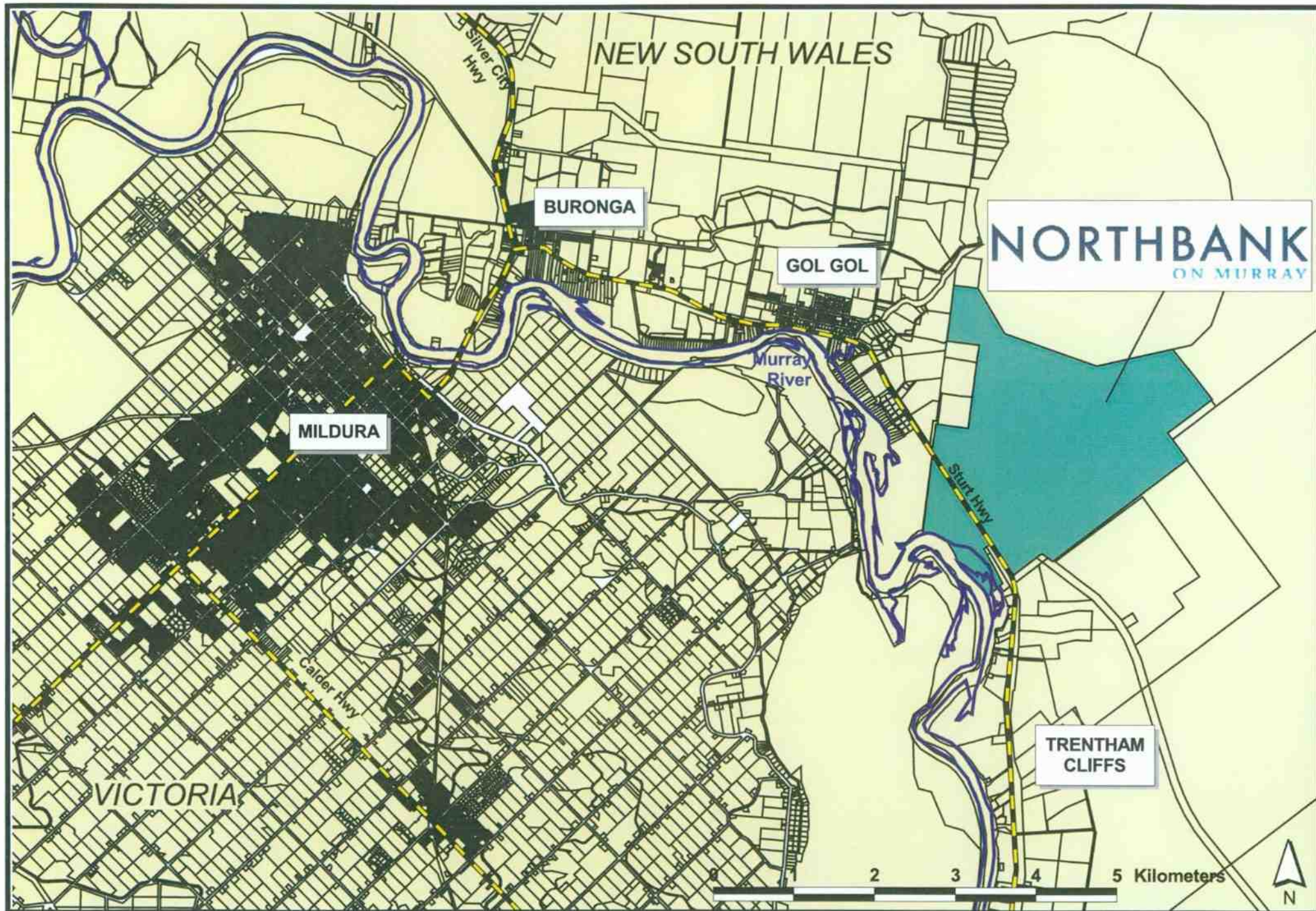
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 T 037198 0124 | E info@studioa2.com.au | www.studioa2.com.au
 1515-DD-003
 March 2018

Project
Proposed Tourist Development
 Gol Gol, NSW
Schematic Design Proposal

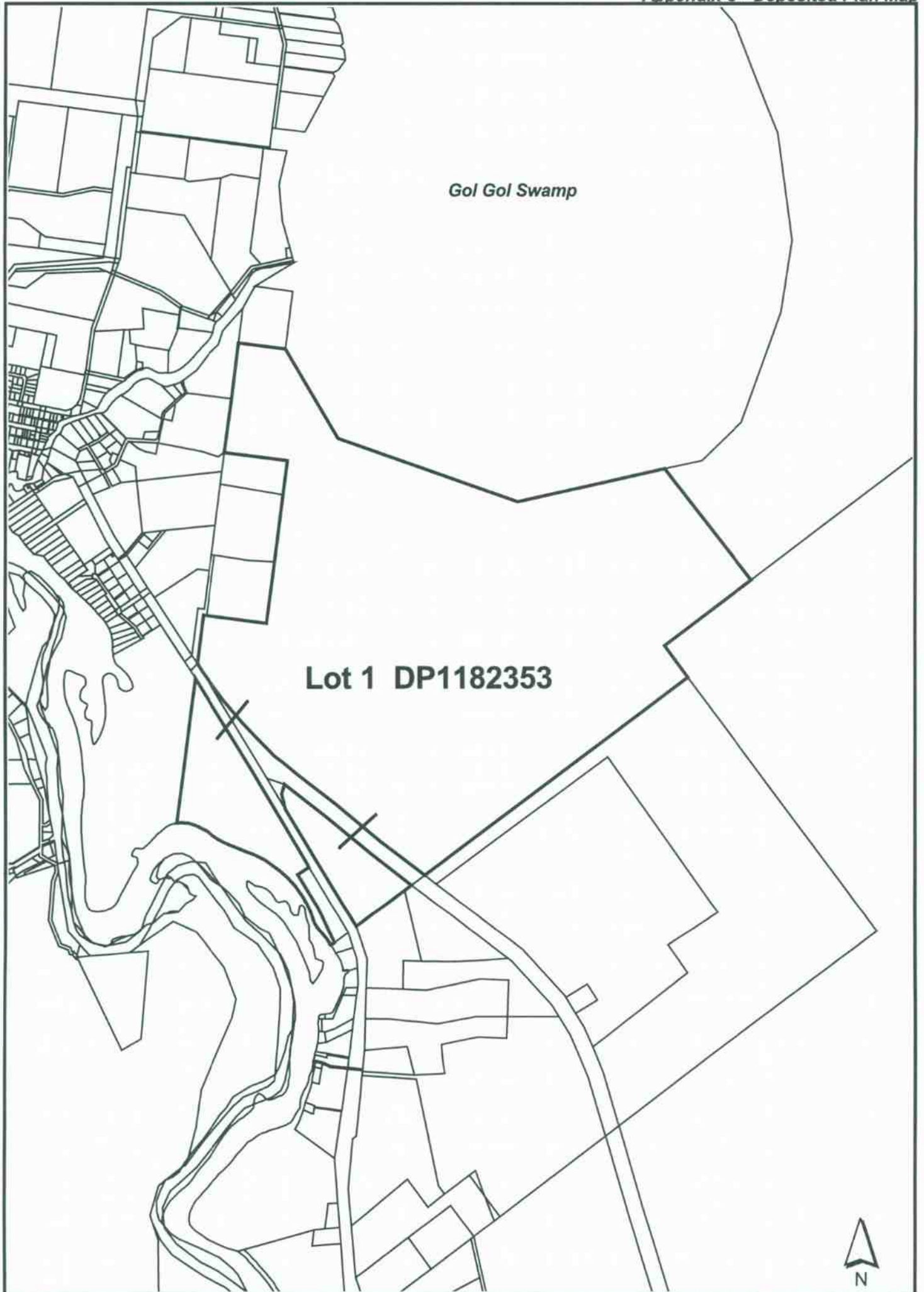
Drawing
Site Plan
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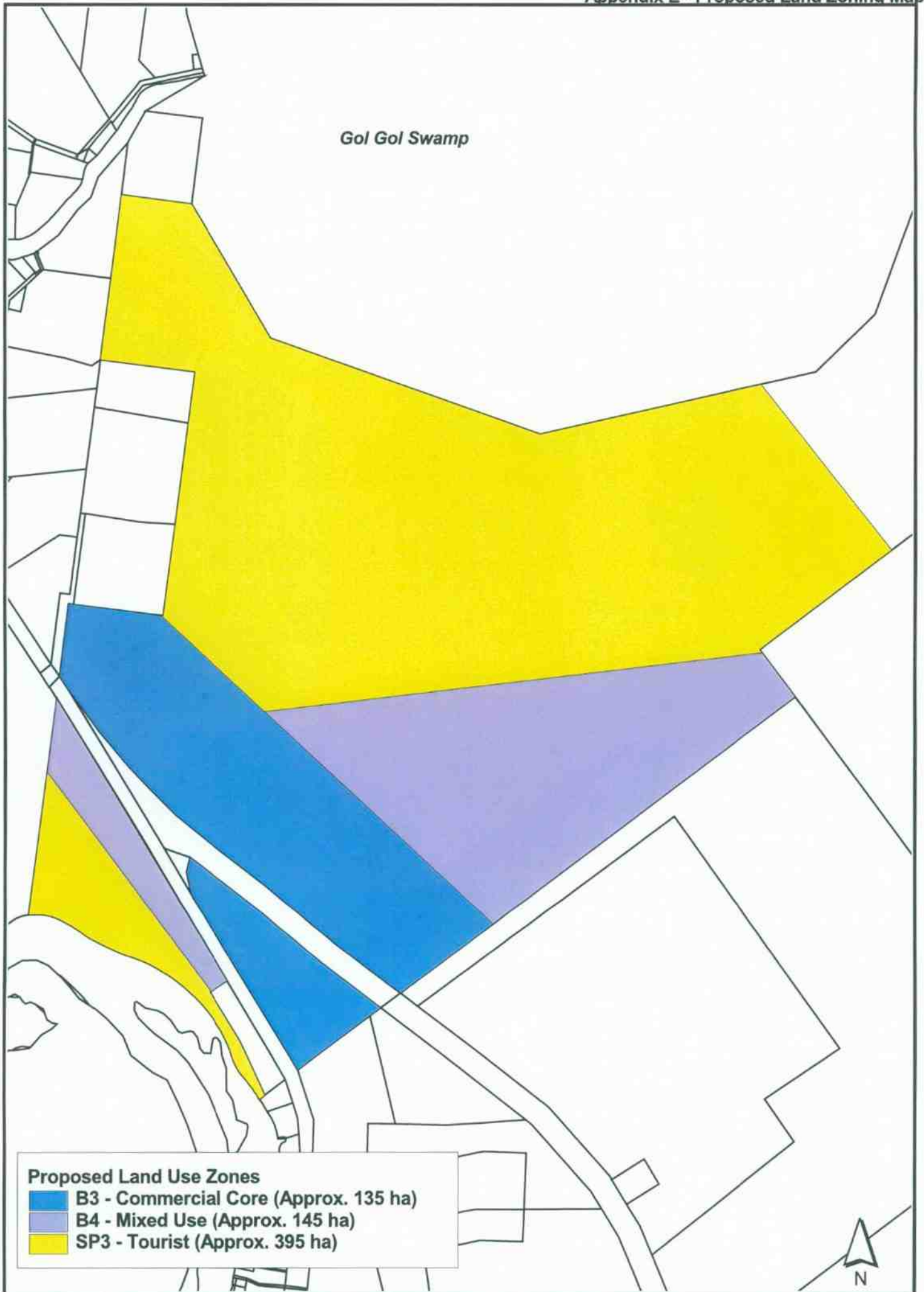


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Appendix B - Site Location Map







PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

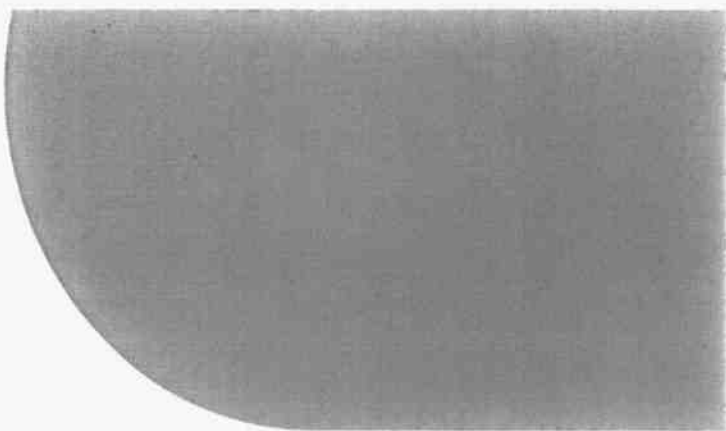
Product development is about what we as a community have to offer to potential new residents, businesses, and visitors, and how we communicate this. Therefore product development encompasses a variety of activities such as infrastructure development (power, sewer, water, communications etc), the development of business and technology parks and township and precinct development. This section is about understanding and developing the current and future physical support needs and requirements of our region.

We aim to achieve:

- Improved business and tourism infrastructure
- Increase in visitor numbers and spend within the region
- Increased business investment into the region
- Expand and improve the liveability, and sustainability of the entire community by attracting employment, shopping, recreation and social activities.

The way forward — what we will do

Actions	Timing
Conduct a commercial and industrial land use study in Wentworth, Buronga Gol/Gol and Dareton to determine capacity and constraints.	09/10
Conduct consumer research and competitor analysis to identify the region's strengths and opportunities for development	09/10
Encourage the development of tourism product, including festival and event product and experiences that enhances the region's competitive strengths.	ongoing
Source and disseminate industry research data to the marketplace and represent the tourism industry and the region's interests as a lobbyist for appropriate sustainable infrastructure and services	ongoing
Build the image of the region through strong brand positioning for both tourism and business investment. Explore an overall community theme, supported by themes for each township	10/11
Develop a "Gateway Project" for each township. This will enhance the entrance ways to each of the townships, giving the viewer a positive image of the community and encouraging appropriate types of development.	10/11
Establish a "Revitalisation Program" for each township to expand and improve the liveability, and sustainability of the entire community by attracting employment, shopping, recreation and social activities.	10/11
Establish "Focal Points" for development through the creation of business parks and commercial precincts.	10/11
In conjunction with Regional Tourism Organisations and Wentworth Regional Tourism, enhance the visitor experience by reviewing and updating local signage, and interpretative signage across the Region.	09/10
Support product development strategies focussed on the region's core and emerging strengths	ongoing



Tourism

BACKGROUND

Tourism is a significant component of the regional economy, principally based around the Murray River and contributed over \$464 million in 2006. Employment in accommodation and food services (such as cafes and restaurants) has increased significantly since 2001 with most of the Region experiencing around 17% increase in this area. Tourism directly employs around 5.8% of the Region's workforce, or in other words 2900 people, although there are wider employment benefits to the services and retail sectors.

Much of the region is within a relatively easy distance of Melbourne and this is reflected in the fact that over 50% of all overnight visitors to the Region are from Victoria. Most of the 1.85 million annual visitors come to the Region for either day trips or short breaks and weekends away.

Tourism in the Region is strongly connected to the natural assets of the Region, particularly the Murray River itself, as well as the history

and culture of places throughout the wider Region (including areas on the Victorian side of the border). The Region boasts a diverse range of tourist attractions, including the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area, the riverboat fleet at Mildura and Echuca-Moama, the Deniliquin Ute Muster, the Henty Farm Machinery Field Days, and historic towns such as Corowa, Deniliquin and Wentworth. There are opportunities for fishing along the Region's rivers and for recreational boating and water-skiing at Lake Mulwala and Lake Hume. The rural landscape provides opportunities for farm-stay style tourism as well as events such as food and wine trails, linked to local agricultural production. In addition, areas near the Murray River are very popular for camping, particularly at Christmas and Easter.

Camping grounds and caravan parks form a significant part of the tourism infrastructure for the Region. In addition to these, houseboats also provide holiday accommodation. The Region is also noted for its many golf

courses, which attract golfers from beyond the region, particularly Melbourne. This type of development seeks out attractive locations near the Murray River. This is particularly evident in locations where water pools, such as Lake Mulwala. Tourist developments can place additional stress on the riverine environment and can also place significant pressure on demand for water. Because of this, there is a need to manage these activities carefully.

Continued growth in tourism is strongly supported as a way to build the economic strength of the Murray. Because of the strong connections between tourism and the natural and cultural assets of the Region, further growth in tourism needs to be managed to ensure these assets are protected and enhanced. The desire for river-based activities and riverside tourist accommodation in particular needs to be considered in the light of climate change and uncertainty over future river flow patterns. Tourism should also be managed and located so that it strengthens existing towns and villages.



No more than 20% accom of permanent residential

Tourist development, which includes a component of permanent residential development, should be integrated with existing settlements, complementing the range of employment opportunities and available services, rather than being located in isolated areas.

Balancing the role of the River Murray as an economic asset for tourism and irrigation versus its important environmental role (as well as its social and cultural significance) is a central challenge for the Region.

HOUSING ASSOCIATED WITH TOURIST DEVELOPMENTS

In recent years there has been a trend to combine tourism development and accommodation with permanent residential development. The Murray Region has a strong demand for combined tourism-residential developments, such as marinas and golf courses with an associated component of

residential housing. The location of these types of developments and the scale of housing proposed can be very significant to a local area. This type of development can also impact on the logical and expected growth pattern of towns and villages and create issues concerning the delivery of services and infrastructure for councils.

Proposals for residential development, whether associated with a tourist development or not, should be considered in the same way as other urban expansion proposals, and generally be closely associated with existing urban areas where services and infrastructure are located. In areas where residential development is not considered appropriate, combined tourist and residential development will generally be considered to be inappropriate.

Large tourist/residential developments should not be located in areas that conflict with or compromise the growth of existing urban centres. By encouraging these types of development in well planned,

strategic locations, it is possible to take advantage of the existing services, infrastructure and markets of existing urban areas.

From time-to-time, proposals may come forward that are outside the parameters of existing strategic planning framework, but may have merit. Tourist development proposals that are not aligned with this Regional Strategy or local strategies will only be considered where they can demonstrate that they meet the requirements of the Sustainability Criteria (Appendix 1).

OUTCOMES

Tourism will strengthen the economic vitality of the Region. It will build on the environmental assets and the social and cultural identity of the Region. Tourism will be sustainable and not deplete or degrade the environment of the Region.

Tourist development on the Murray River and other associated waterways will protect the natural and scenic values of the riverine



tourism

environment, including native vegetation. Tourist development that is permanently fixed within the waterway will be discouraged.

Large scale tourist development will generally be integrated with existing towns and villages.

Tourist development in the Region will help to make towns and villages more sustainable. They will not place inappropriate pressure for urban services (including water) and other infrastructure by being located in inappropriate sites.

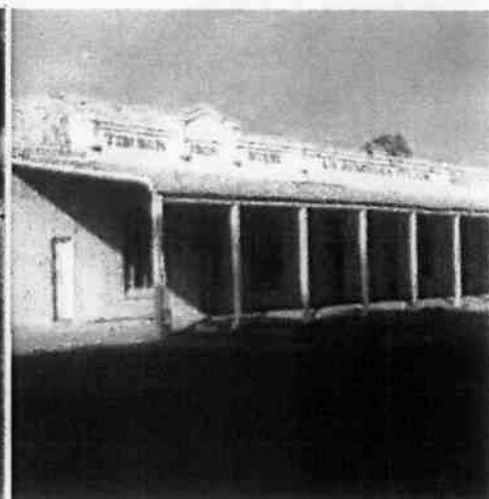
ACTIONS

- In preparing local strategies and local environmental plans, councils will identify appropriate locations for tourist-related development. Local environmental plans will ensure land is available for a range of

tourism experiences and tourist accommodation.

- Where possible, sites identified for new large scale tourist related development will be in or adjacent to existing settlements.
- The Department of Planning and councils will work cooperatively to identify appropriate strategic locations for river-based tourism opportunities, which are compatible with the need to protect the river's key environmental and scenic attributes.
- Additional areas for tourist-related development outside those identified in local environmental plans will only be supported if they can satisfy the Sustainability Criteria in Appendix 1.

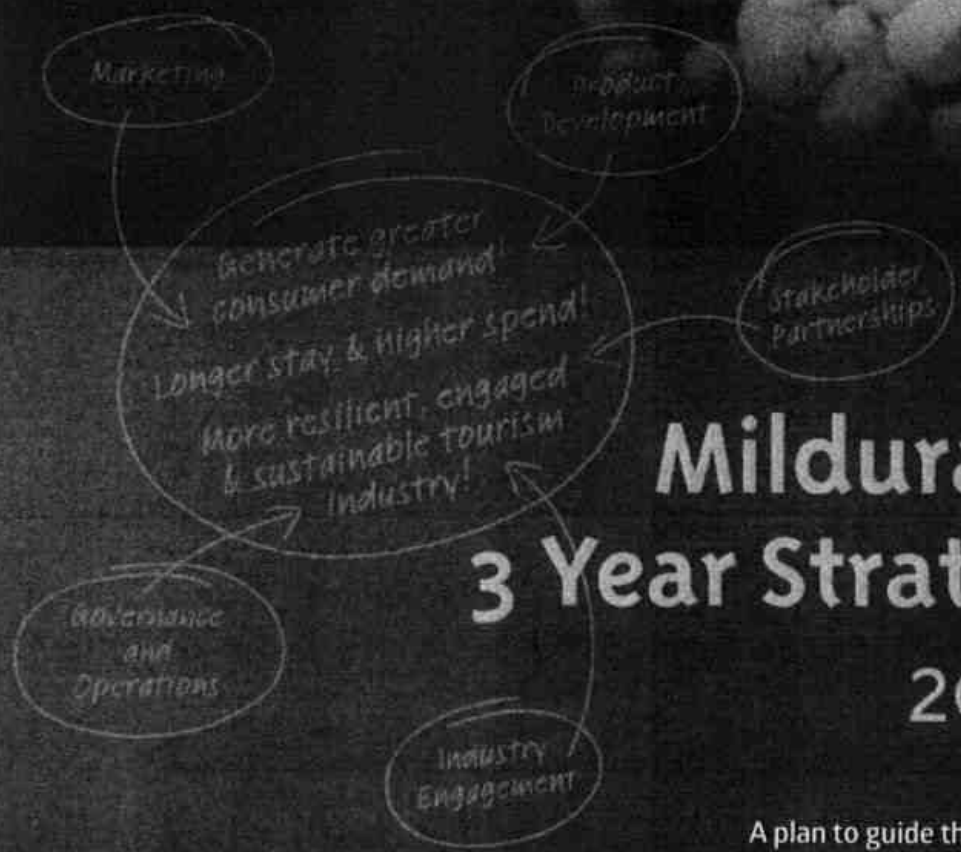
- When preparing local strategies and local environmental plans councils are to assess the best locations for tourist-related development and consider the ability to provide new or upgraded infrastructure and services for such development.
- Reticulated water and sewer must be provided to tourist development that is integrated with urban areas.
- Councils will consult with relevant Victorian authorities where a major tourist development in NSW is likely to impact on infrastructure, services, land use or the environment in Victoria.



SPECIFIC ISSUES IN MILDURA TO BE ADDRESSED

Specific issues that a Mildura Region Destination Management Plan should address include:

- Identification of game changing projects which will help invigorate the Mildura visitor economy and provide new motivators for visitation;
- Better utilisation of the Murray River as an asset: **This includes consumer and visitor interaction; leisure, dining and accommodation facilities/activities;** as well as indigenous, cultural and heritage experiences that interact with the Murray River;
- Prioritise the many investment projects previously identified in order to provide a clear framework for strategic investment in Mildura;
- Investigate ways to strengthen the local and regional produce experience in a region that has many large commercial operators;
- Identify ways to strengthen the CBD experience and leverage from the strong food product experience such as improving the tourist retail offer;
- Provide additional research and understanding of Mildura's visitor markets, including which markets Mildura should target to grow its visitor economy;
- Identify barriers to Mildura's growth such as air capacity, distance from major source markets (Melbourne and Sydney) and planning hurdles.



Mildura Tourism 3 Year Strategic Plan 2015 – 2017

A plan to guide the direction and success of tourism marketing, new product development and industry professionalism in the Mildura region.

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Our Vision

Mildura region will be renowned for, and distinguished by, its range of quality tourism offerings and successful events built around an iconic combination of tourism products that embrace big river, food and wine, nature-based, arts and cultural, historic and sporting experiences. Domestically and internationally, Mildura will be acclaimed as one of Australia's most eminent inland cities.

Our Mission

To promote the Mildura region domestically and internationally as a premier holiday destination, providing strategic direction for the region's tourism marketing, industry professionalism and new product development.

Our success will be measured by community, industry and stakeholder understandings that tourism is a prominent driver of the region's economic, social and environmental well being and, ultimately, by Mildura establishing an undeniable reputation for regional tourism excellence, innovation and sustainability.

Our Operating Principles

Mildura Tourism operates in line with the following principles:

- a. We provide leadership for the development and marketing of Mildura's regional tourism
- b. We are an independent voice for the region's tourism industry
- c. We encourage environmentally sustainable and culturally appropriate practices in the tourism industry.
- d. We operate with a high level of accountability and transparency to our industry stakeholders.
- e. We are efficient and cost-effective in the management of our resources.

Executive Summary

This plan builds on previous strategic efforts that have aimed to change people's views of the Mildura region. Mildura Tourism's objective remains to position our region as a modern

and vibrant destination that is continually growing, evolving and improving. This plan recognises that successful tourism destinations, products and experiences must be continually refreshed and revitalised to maintain existing customers and to generate new ones.

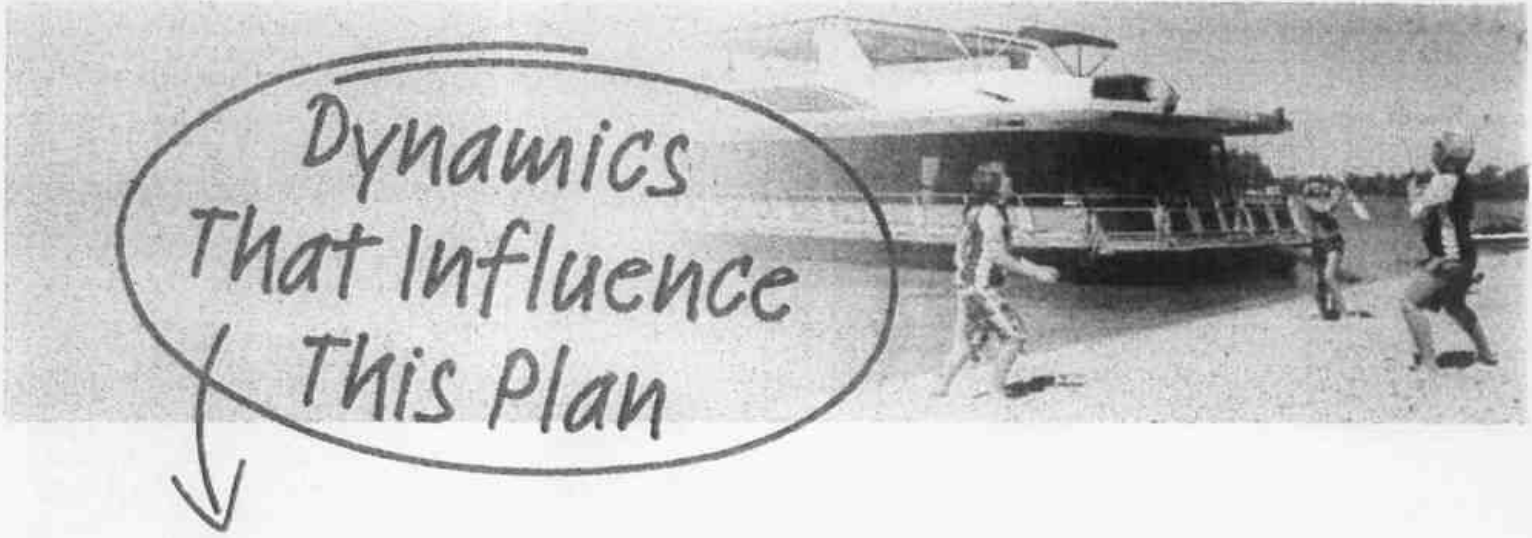
Different perceptions exist of Mildura. Outcomes from this plan are intended to refine people's views so they instinctively reflect accurate, positive, contemporary and sophisticated understandings that Mildura is much more than an important regional centre – it is an appealing, celebrated and significant inland Australian city. Mildura's tourism brand obligation is to strengthen this proposition.

A key objective of this plan remains to increase visitation and resultant business yield, delivering stronger economic benefits which in turn can fuel investment in new infrastructure and attractions. Tourism success will provide greater strategic capability to attract new industry and business, along with skilled and professional workforces that growing and buoyant regions require. This strategic plan underlines the major role of tourism to act as a key driver of Mildura's economic, social and environmental well-being.

Setting the scene for this plan is commentary on eight collective dynamics that influence tourism within the Mildura region. Those dynamics are: Global and domestic economic factors; Changing consumer trends and travel patterns; Digital excellence and changing media landscapes; Stakeholder partnerships, Environmental events and impacts; Investment and new product attraction; Skills and workforce development; and Mildura's culture and strong regional personality.

Five focus areas are nominated where achievements are required for this plan to be successful. Those focus areas are: External Marketing; Product Development; Stakeholder Partnerships, Industry Engagement, and Governance and Operations.

Revitalisation is a key platform within the Mildura Tourism 2015 – 2017 Strategic Plan. In a constantly changing business environment hugely influenced by constantly changing consumer demands and expectations, continual revitalization of our tourism industry and tourism products is essential.



Dynamics That Influence This Plan

1 Global and domestic economic factors

Regularly changing global and domestic economic factors, including political change, are now an accepted part of life. Economic downturns at any level heighten consumer uncertainty which in turn slows down discretionary tourism spending. Declines in confidence also flow through to areas such as infrastructure and product investment with often negative impacts on tourism. Mildura's tourism industry will never be immune from constantly changing economic and political factors and operators must work to adapt to fluctuating impacts and influences.

2 Changing consumer trends and travel patterns

Mildura continues to face increasing competition domestically and internationally as destinations become more aggressive and price competitive with their marketing. This activity has also been supported by the on-going competitiveness of air travel. Large volume capital city markets have maintained their preference to travel overseas ahead of regional destinations for an extended holiday. Domestic travel remains viewed as the preferred option for short breaks. Shorter stays present potential downturns for operators who are reliant on domestic overnight visitor spending.

Against this backdrop there are encouraging consumer trends that focus on personal and environmental well-being, inspiring visitors to seek out authentic, simpler and back-to-basics experiences overlayed with desires to re-connect with each other, friends, families and communities. For a destination like Mildura this further reflects consumers' willingness to seek out and interact with regional product offerings, particularly where food and wine, arts and cultural, sporting, as well as indigenous and nature-based experiences consistently fit with travellers' personal values and beliefs.

3 Digital excellence and changing media landscapes

It is no longer an option ... successful tourism now hinges on developing and maintaining digital excellence in branding, marketing and communications. The emergence of digital technologies along with the influence of social media have also changed the way consumers research and gather information with resultant adjustments to consumers' travel decision-making and booking processes.

User-generated content that provides far-reaching digital word-of-mouth advocacy has become increasingly important to consumers. Such influence presents both threats and opportunities for Mildura Tourism. Staying at the forefront of digital excellence and technology will be essential.

4 Stakeholder partnerships

Strong and successful stakeholder partnerships are essential for the growth and development of our region's tourism industry. Stakeholders do not fit into one simple category – they come from the private and public sectors and are those individuals, groups and organisations that could affect, or could be affected by, the well-being of a viable tourism industry. Stakeholders play a major role in tourism decision-making processes and outcomes, particularly when key operations, projects and initiatives are funding-dependent.

Within the Mildura region, local Governments, numerous State Government departments and agencies, large and small businesses, the education, not-for-profit and volunteer sectors, as well as local sporting and community groups are all important tourism industry stakeholders. Working with these groups significantly increases opportunities for greater mutual benefit.

Accessing new ideas; articulating values, strategies and commitments; and building mutually supportive working relationships are among key benefits that flow from committed, two-way stakeholder buy-in.

5 Environmental events and impacts

Weather events and natural environmental occurrences along with their associated impacts and perceptions can become major issues for Mildura, particularly when outcomes affect the Murray River. Incorrect perceptions along with seeds of uncertainty are planted in consumers' minds when media reports of such events focus on the rare rather than the usual.

Within the climate change context, our region is predicted to endure extreme heat for longer periods and at higher temperatures in future years. This will impact on summer visitation and has product development implications if the region is to successfully stimulate increased visitor demand during Australia's peak summer months.

Consumers' high awareness of climate change and environmental issues will place pressure on Mildura's tourism industry to adopt more sustainable as well as more consumer and environmentally-friendly business practices.

6 Investment and new product attraction

It is acknowledged that Mildura's existing product strengths are built around the Murray and Darling Rivers, food and wine, arts and cultural diversity, nature-based experiences, sporting activities and a strong calendar of premium events. As is the case with many regions, Mildura has its share of ageing tourism assets, some of which are not meeting changing market demands.



Strategic Plan Components



Mildura Tourism's 2015 – 2017 Strategic Plan is structured around five key focus areas:

1 Marketing

2 Product Development

3 Stakeholder Partnerships

4 Industry Engagement

5 Governance and Operations

Achievements in these focus areas are required to:

- Generate greater consumer demand.
- Increase length of stay and expenditure.
- Build a more resilient, engaged and sustainable tourism industry.

In line with accepted best practice strategic planning principles, Mildura Tourism acknowledges that this plan must ensure that our organisation does not simply adopt our 'default future' – i.e. the place we could end up if no new actions are taken to change our traditional path. To achieve this, our strategic plan provides informed commentary and choices about what needs to be done to guide the organisation in the most suitable direction. The combination of continuing with some current programs while also introducing various new initiatives will assist Mildura Tourism to continually examine where it wants to be in future years and whether it is on course to get there.

The following pages present the detail of Mildura Tourism's Strategic Plan, articulating objectives for each Focus Area and then identifying respective Topics, Strategic Issues, Actions and Evaluation Methods for implementation.

To maintain existing customers as well as attracting new visitors, destinations need to continually refresh themselves along with their attractions and tourism experiences. New products give consumers new reasons to visit a region. New product development can be expensive and time consuming when starting from scratch, or it can be very cost effective if there is an existing base that facilitates product improvement.

Mildura has the opportunity to showcase new projects and initiatives, providing the basis to develop products that will strengthen many of the region's distinctive areas of appeal. On-going analysis of existing tourism products including any gaps that may be apparent will help to identify new opportunities and new consumer segments that could be attracted to the region.

7 Skills and workforce development

Today's tourists are experienced, discerning and sophisticated travellers with high expectations of tourism services and standards. Skilled labour is a critical component of business success, as is training and on-going professional development – not only for staff but also for small business owners. Labour shortages, staff recruitment and retention, plus improving skills and service standards are important issues in the Mildura region.

Similarly, structured professional development for business operators and managers is highly desirable to ensure that the tourism experiences delivered meet customer expectations. Competition is hotting up amongst Victoria's regions to attract the most talented people, innovators and entrepreneurs. Our region must aim to nurture our own future tourism industry entrepreneurs, as well as establish a competitive position to attract other business trailblazers into the region.

8 Mildura's culture and strong regional personality

Success of tourism in our region has remained highly dependent on the enthusiasm, acceptance and culture of our local community. Mildura has an exceptionally strong regional personality, heightened in many ways by its isolation coupled with its stoic ability to face adversity when it arises and to emerge successfully from it. Recognising and adapting efficiently to necessary change remains a challenge for our region.

Harnessing the community's many strengths and collective abilities is fundamental to our community's desire to embrace tourism's constantly changing environment and become proud and knowledgeable ambassadors for the region.

1. Marketing

Objectives

- Raise awareness and improve perceptions of the region as a must visit destination.
- Convert intentions to visit into action through attractive product offers.
- Encourage longer length of stay and expenditure in the region through effective marketing campaigns and communications.

Topic	Strategic Issue	Actions	Evaluation Methods
Market Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Successful marketing is based on market research to understand visitors' perceptions, behaviours and preferences; to clarify target markets; and to identify appropriate communication channels. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Undertake consumer perceptions research every 2-3 years. 2 Access annual visitation data and market research for local insights and to monitor broader market trends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Benchmark against previous research · Compare with previous years' data and research
Brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Changes in market tastes and to the region's product offer requires a reassessment of the brand proposition and expression. · Revitalise Mildura's tourism brand, being aware that multiple different sector brands within the region already exist. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Review and revitalise the brand offer and brand expression used to underpin marketing activities, in association with tourism and other business stakeholders. 4 Work with other industry sectors to build awareness of Mildura Tourism's brand, key messages, imagery and application etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Consumer perceptions research · Number of organisations and tourism operators who utilise the brand in their promotional activities
Marketing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Major markets for the region continue to be domestic visitors, including Visiting Friends and Relatives, with some emerging international markets. · Challenge of spreading available resources across traditional and contemporary marketing channels. · Murray Regional Tourism Board conducts regional marketing initiatives where selective collaboration can provide advantages. · Marketing of the region requires greater industry understanding, vision-sharing, commitment and buy-in. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5 Develop annual Marketing Action Plans which incorporate the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Confirm domestic and international target markets. · Innovative promotional campaigns that reflect the appropriate communication channels for target markets, including a strong emphasis on digital marketing. · Capacity to accommodate spontaneous opportunities, usually 'big ticket' items. · Identify evaluation mechanisms for each initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Evaluation mechanisms identified in each annual plan



Topic	Strategic Issue	Actions	Evaluation Methods
Packaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumers increasingly expect value for money, diversity of product choice tailored to their interests, and ease of booking 	6 Work with Mildura Tourism members to develop and promote packages for a range of target markets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of packages developed and sold Value of packages sold
Climate Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural climate events are occurring more frequently and affect perceptions of the region as a desirable holiday destination. 	7 Monitor the impacts of climate events on the region's brand and address with public relations and other activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumer perceptions research Visitation data
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is accepted that climate impacts may result in a hotter summer season which is perceived as a less attractive time to visit. 	8 Conduct campaigns focused on building appropriate visitation during all seasons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitation data
		9 When upgrading or refreshing their product/s, encourage tourism operators, businesses and event organisers to incorporate strategies and experiences that reduce impacts and negative perceptions of higher temperatures and improve visitor comfort.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of consultations with tourism operators



2. Product Development

Objectives

- Stimulate the revitalisation of the region's product offers to support increased visitation, length of stay and expenditure.

Topic	Strategic Issue	Actions	Evaluation Methods
Product upgrades and new developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Visitors are increasingly seeking authentic, more interactive and educational experiences. There is growing demand for environmentally friendly products and services in response to concerns about climate change. · Tourism operators across the industry need to reinvest and refresh their products and services to remain competitive and meet changing market expectations. · New product development is required to meet the needs of traditional, as well as changing and emerging markets. · New visitor infrastructure is also essential to support the visitor experience, encourage private sector investment, and to improve transport connections. 	<p>10 Work with relevant Government and industry partners to champion a feasibility study for a Mildura Region Tourism Destination Management Plan. This plan would include a Product Development Strategy that incorporates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Identifies product and infrastructure gaps for target markets and potential markets. · Identifies new opportunities associated with recent legislative changes, e.g. potential tourism development in national parks. · Identifies enabling infrastructure that will encourage private sector investment. · Prioritise key product improvements and new product required, in particular where opportunities can be leveraged off existing projects such as the Riverfront Redevelopment as well as future opportunities such as a Motor Sports Hub. · Identifies activities to encourage tourism operators to refresh their products. 	<p>Evaluation mechanisms to be identified in the plan. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Stakeholders' commitment to a Destination Management Plan feasibility study · Ultimate development and implementation of a Mildura Region Tourism Destination Management Plan · Within this plan, the number and value of new tourism infrastructure projects planned · Number of projects provided with Mildura Tourism Letters of Support



Topic	Strategic Issue	Actions	Evaluation Methods
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning is required to co-ordinate the efforts of private and public sector interests and to ensure that the needs of various target markets are considered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews transport options and makes recommendations for improvements and new infrastructure. Investigate business cases for new priority projects. 11. Provide advice to members who are seeking assistance to upgrade their products and services, including funding opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of consultations with tourism operators.



3. Stakeholder Partnerships

Objectives

- To build support levels for Mildura Tourism and our programs.
- To increase the co-ordination amongst stakeholders of tourism-related activities in the region.
- To increase understanding of the value of tourism in the community.
- To provide leadership on regional tourism related issues.

Topic	Strategic Issue	Actions	Evaluation Methods
Relationships	The support and cooperation of stakeholders with Mildura Tourism are essential for the long-term sustainability of the organisation and its capacity to undertake effective tourism marketing and development programs, including responding to specific issues, incidents and events.	12 Maintain current three-year Memorandum of Understanding with Mildura Rural City Council and Wentworth Shire Council which outlines their financial support of Mildura Tourism and the responsibilities of each organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scheduled reviews with local councils.
		13 Develop a Stakeholder Communications and Engagement schedule which identifies processes to initiate and maintain two-way relationships with key stakeholder sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation mechanisms to be identified in the plan. Examples include: - Number of stakeholder meetings and levels of attendance. - Number of e-bulletins opened. - Feedback from stakeholders as part of review processes.
Co-ordination	Co-ordination and collaboration amongst stakeholders is crucial to maximise the effectiveness of product development and marketing activities.	14 Championing of a new Destination Management Plan feasibility study to establish new and desired directions for the region's tourism industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of stakeholders participating in initiatives.



Topic	Strategic Issue	Actions	Evaluation Methods
Value of tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to encourage greater participation and support for tourism amongst local residents and the wider business community, stronger awareness and understanding is needed about the widespread economic and social benefits that can arise from a well-managed tourism industry. Community education and engagement is also essential if the region is to attract and maintain talented people in tourism businesses. 	15 Conduct 'Value of Tourism' campaign elements that target community and business stakeholders utilising an integrated series of communications activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor public and stakeholder response levels to various campaign elements. Level of media coverage.
		16 Explore linkages with the education and training sector to increase students' understanding of potential careers in the tourism industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the number of projects incorporating tourism learnings.
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the region's peak tourism organisation, Mildura Tourism should advocate on behalf of the tourism industry on important issues. 	17 Determine key advocacy platforms and communications strategies that are consultative with Mildura Tourism members and key stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor industry response along with levels of media coverage.
Events support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where appropriate provide strategic advice and support to relevant major tourism and business events. 	18 Working with stakeholders and event organisers as appropriate opportunities are identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of occasions where support is provided.

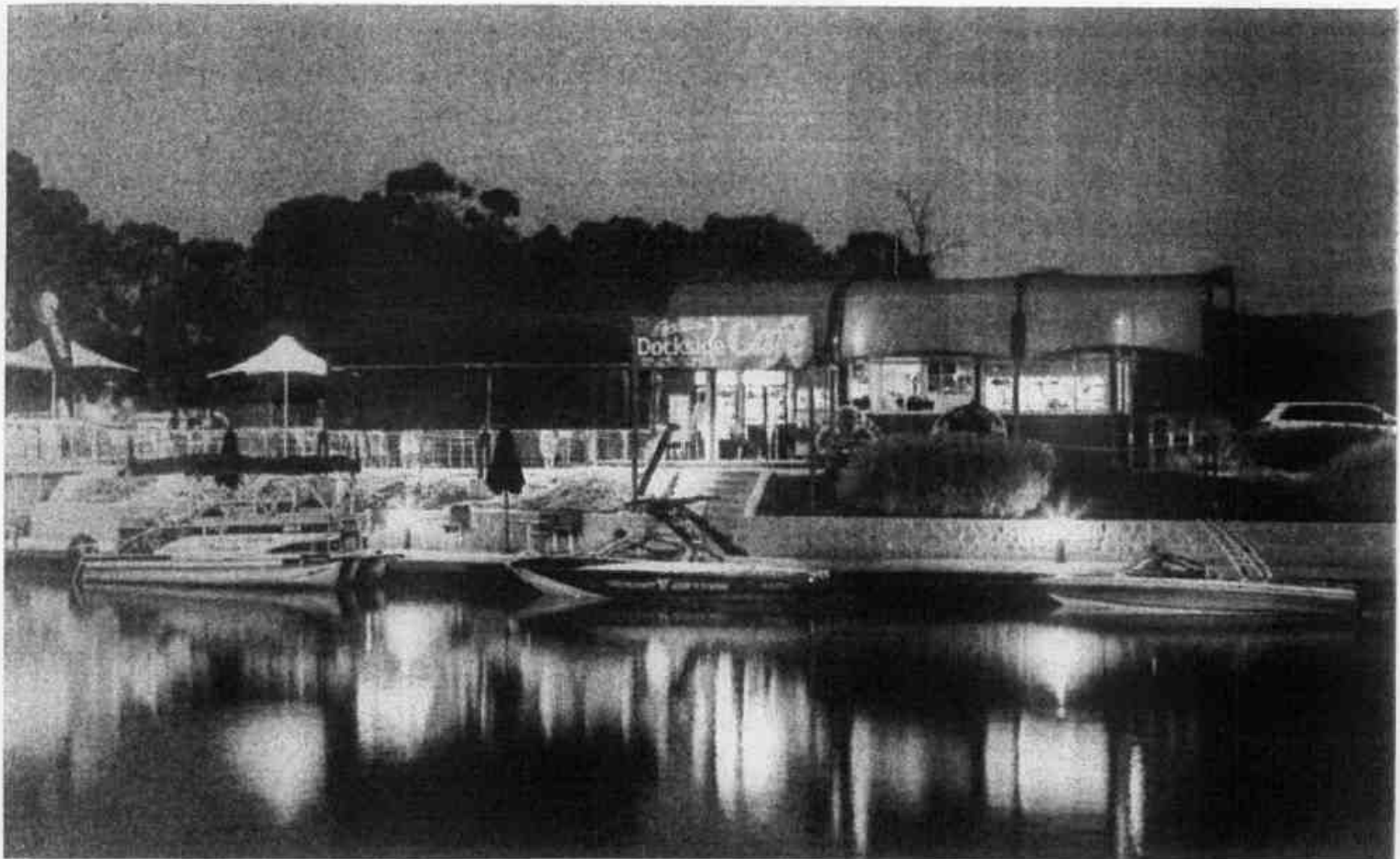


4. Industry Engagement

Objectives

- To increase membership of Mildura Tourism.
- To increase industry participation and collaboration in tourism-related initiatives.
- To increase the capacity of Mildura Tourism members to generate greater visitor satisfaction through their products and services, hence increasing the viability of their businesses.

Topic	Strategic Issue	Actions	Evaluation Methods
Participation and collaboration	· Opportunity to significantly improve industry take-up of marketing opportunities. Bringing tourism operators together behind a cohesive marketing vision and approach is a challenge. There is also a lack of understanding about Mildura Tourism's marketing roles.	19 Conduct membership awareness/benefits campaigns, continuing these in consultation with Mildura Tourism operators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Scheduled member satisfaction survey. · Number of financial MT members. · Financial level of co-op support pledged by members for marketing activities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · To secure and maintain the support of the region's tourism operators, Mildura Tourism needs to effectively and regularly communicate with its tourism operators. · Support Mildura Tourism members to improve their relationships within the industry to stimulate their motivation, increase access to knowledge and resources, and develop opportunities for referrals, amongst other benefits. 	20 Identify and implement communications and engagement initiatives relevant to MT members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Evaluation mechanisms such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Number of networking sessions and levels of attendance. · Number of e-bulletins issued and opened. · Number of member business advice consultations
	· Need for the tourism industry to increasingly engage in self-initiated collaborative marketing and product development initiatives with benefits to participants and the broader industry.	21 Encourage MT member participation in external training programs that can build tourism industry capacity to work collaboratively together to implement initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Number of member requests to seek out and participate in external activities. · Evaluation of programs by participants.



Topic	Strategic Issue	Actions	Evaluation Methods
Skill development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to meet sophisticated consumer expectations requires many tourism operators to gain a high level of business, operational and digital/social media skills. The provision of good customer service is a critical element of quality visitor experiences which needs to be reinforced through industry training. 	<p>22 Prepare an Industry Development Plan which includes identification and implementation of relevant professional excellence training programs, including opportunities available in conjunction with other agencies such as Tourism Victoria and Murray Regional Tourism. Training topics could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital marketing and social media; Customer service quality including 'sale closure' and the 'exit' experience; Cultural awareness and product development for international growth markets; Crisis management preparation, response and recovery; Environmental sustainability practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation mechanisms to be identified in the plan. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of participants attending activities Level of adoption of practices after training (follow up survey). 'Mystery Shopper' program (for independent assessment).

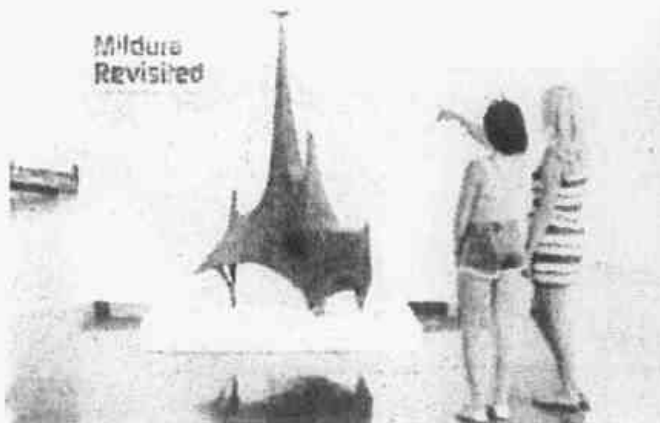


5. Governance and Operations

Objectives

- To operate Mildura Tourism according to best practice principles of governance and operations.

Topic	Strategic Issue	Actions	Evaluation Methods
Financial management and good governance	Mildura Tourism will be positioned as a leader in good governance by providing transparent decision making that is accountable to its funding partners and it members. This practice allows the industry to understand decision-making processes, leading to better decisions, healthier partnerships and a stronger tourism organisation.	<p>23 Comply with Mildura Tourism's constitutional and governance requirements including the holding of scheduled Board meetings, its AGM, and the preparation of an audited Annual Report.</p> <p>24 Develop Mildura Tourism's programs in consultation with members and other industry stakeholders.</p> <p>25 Report outcomes of evaluation activities to members and industry stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Annual performance review with local councils. · Scheduled member satisfaction survey. · Annual audit of financial records. · Review of annual business plan against KPIs. · Media coverage achieved with the public release of tourism visitation.





Topic	Strategic Issue	Actions	Evaluation Methods
Professional standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Mildura Tourism should be a role model in professional standards for the tourism industry. · Board members should be appropriately skilled in good governance and effective participation in board processes. · Staff require a range of skills to implement the Strategic Plan, including facilitation skills so they can work collaboratively and consultatively with Mildura Tourism members to engender their support and co-operation. 	26 Develop an annual Professional Development Program for Mildura Tourism staff and board members to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Annual performance reviews of Mildura Tourism staff and the board directors. · Scheduled member satisfaction survey.





visitmildura.com.au

PO Box 3103
Mildura Victoria 3502 Australia
Telephone 03 5021 0599
Facsimile 03 5021 0588
Email admin@milduratourism.com.au

milduratourism

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objective of this project is to improve the quality and range of the Murray Region's tourism product offer with a view to driving increases in visitation, length of stay and the visitor experience. The project is based on developing an understanding of the region's tourism markets, triggers for visitation, tourism product gaps; and identifying projects that will have a significant impact on the tourism industry in the Murray Region.

BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH

A background research paper was prepared which consolidated the findings from the assessment of visitor markets, product gap analysis, consultation with stakeholders and industry and review of tourism policy.

The main theme to be taken out of the research is that the region should be promoting and developing the river further: the Murray River is the unique and defining attribute. Many of the cities and towns along the Murray are not structured in ways that link the riverfront with their CBD, or do not provide strong and compelling riverfront experiences for visitors.

The second overarching theme identified in the research and consultation is the need for development of visitor activities at destinations throughout the region, referred to as 'Destination Development' throughout this report.

Other key points identified in the research and consultation undertaken to inform this project include:

- **There is strong Government policy and strategy support at all levels of Government highlighting the need for investment in product and infrastructure to promote growth in the tourism industry;**
- **The region's primary tourism strengths identified through the product audit are Golf and History and Heritage;**
- **There has been a decline in visitation to the Murray over the past decade, particularly people aged 15 to 44; and**

- **Visitation forecasts based on recent visitation trends and ABS population growth forecasts indicate limited growth over the next decade, unless investment in new tourism product is achieved.**

DIRECT VISITOR RESEARCH

Market research, undertaken by Colmar Brunton surveyed 1,000 people to determine their perceptions of and intentions to travel to the Murray Region. This research provides insight into the product development opportunities included in this document.

The survey indicates that one of the factors in determining holiday destinations is the availability of low cost accommodation, which indicates support for the development of backpackers and serviced apartments.

The survey also highlighted the low level of market awareness of the quality nature based tourism opportunities in the Murray Region, and the appeal of these experiences to potential visitors. **Therefore, the emphasis on the development of both the National Parks and tourism opportunities on the river align with the results of the Direct Visitor Research.**

The Direct Visitor Research also supports the view that although the Murray Region has strong agricultural and horticultural industries, these are not necessarily translated into tourism experiences. **The survey indicates that the development of food, wine unique accommodation may attract visitors who have not travelled to the Murray Region before.**

Overall, the experiences that are most likely to generate additional visitation were found to be:

Escaping into the natural world;

Touring routes; and,

History and heritage products;

Touring routes, adventure trails and local produce were also identified as being more likely to attract higher income visitors, which may translate into higher visitor yield.

KEY AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

The summary of research and consultation has led to a number of areas of opportunity for tourism growth through product development in the Murray Region. These have been identified through an assessment of product gaps in the region, consultation with stakeholders and an assessment of visitor markets. Key tourism opportunities include:

- **The River.** Visitor access to and experience of the Murray River itself;
- **National and State Parks.** The diverse and significant natural and indigenous experiences that can be developed in the region's National and State Parks;
- **Golf Infrastructure and Facilities.** Improving the infrastructure and facilities associated with the region's golf courses;
- **Food and Wine.** Providing more opportunities for visitors to access the region's agricultural and viticultural produce, including cellar doors, farm gate sales, providores and restaurants;
- **History, Heritage and Culture.** Developing a range of products highlighting the historic and cultural attributes of the region;
- **Festivals, Events and Conferences.** Developing a coordinated range of major festivals and events throughout the Murray Region and increasing the region's presence in the business events and conference market, through the development of new conference facilities; and
- **Accommodation.** Improving and diversifying the range of accommodation in the region.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The development opportunities for the Murray Region are organised into three categories, **destination development**, which highlights the need to increase the range of product available in locations across the region, **positioning projects** that support tourism investment, and major **development opportunities** which address product gaps. The objectives for each of these initiatives and objectives are included in Table 2.

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

In many of the tourism nodes within the region, there is more likelihood of meeting the objectives of the project (to increase visitation, length of stay and the visitor experience) through a range of smaller projects rather than large single developments.

The projects identified as Destination Development initiatives include:

- **Improvement of river access infrastructure;**
- Development of touring routes that link the Murray's destinations;
- **Infrastructure investment in camping and visitor facilities;**
- **Designated safe swimming areas;**
- Investment in tracks and trails;
- **Infrastructure to support bird watching;**
- Investment in indigenous sites and interpretation;
- Upgrades to Golf Club facilities;
- **Development of riverfront dining and accommodation;**
- **A more diverse range of food and accommodation;**
- **Access to local produce and cellar doors;**
- Streetscaping and town entrances; and
- Standardised tourist and directional signage.

TABLE 1 OPPORTUNITIES AND OBJECTIVES

Opportunity	Objective
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	
Destination Development	Strengthen the Murray's destinations through development of engaging visitor activities, investment in quality tourist infrastructure and appealing townships.
Positioning Projects	Strengthen the Murray's tourism product offer by positioning the Murray as an accessible, authentic and unique Australian icon.
DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES	
The River	Promote and develop the river as the unique and essential element of the region's tourism offer, including passive, active and social uses of the river and its banks.
National and State Parks: Nature based and indigenous tourism	Ensure that National and State Parks deliver high quality nature based and indigenous experiences through improvements to infrastructure and the development of innovative tourism products.
Golf Infrastructure and Facilities	Strengthen and increase the prominence of golf tourism in the Murray through facility renewal and attraction of new investment in golf infrastructure.
Food and Wine	Improve the Murray's food and wine tourism offer by encouraging primary producers to develop tourism infrastructure, promoting the use of local produce and the development of diverse and unique dining experiences.
History, Heritage and Culture	Provide unique Murray heritage experiences through improvement and modernisation of existing heritage icons and strengthening heritage interpretation linked to military history, river trade and transport, pioneers and irrigation.
Festivals, Events and Conferences	Promote an increase in year round visitation to the Murray through event facility investment and coordinated development and promotion of a series of events and conferences linked to the Murray's tourism strengths.
Accommodation	To diversify the accommodation base in the Murray region to appeal to target visitor segments
Infrastructure	Ensure that the Murray provides critical infrastructure to maintain and strengthen accessibility for visitors to the region.

POSITIONING PROJECTS

A range of projects that are more aligned to marketing and positioning of the Murray than product development have been identified through the study. These projects are required to support product development initiatives in order to reach the objectives of the study.

- Inclusion of the Murray River in the Australia's National Landscapes Program to help raise the profile of the unique landscape of the Murray Region;
- Online presence development including website, mobile friendly website, applications and online social media to meet consumer expectations for visitor information and trip motivation;
- Development of Mildura, Gateway to the Outback Packages to strengthen the international and interstate visitation potential of the Murray Region linking to Mungo National Park;
- The development of a coordinated major events calendar building on existing major tourism events;
- Short break and golf packages targeted to key domestic markets;
- A Murray region food and wine brand building on the Murray's role as an important food bowl in Australia;
- Attraction of coach tours; and attracting a low cost carrier to Mildura to strengthen access for international and interstate visitors.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The product development opportunities identified for the Murray Region are those that have been assessed as most likely to meet the project's goals, to drive increases in visitation, length of stay and the visitor experience. Each of these development opportunities have a clear objective, which can be used to assess future development proposals in the Murray Region.

PRODUCT GAPS

Table 2 provides a summary of the most significant product gaps and development opportunities for the Murray Region. This is based on the analysis of visitation, strategies, products and consultation included in Part 1 of this report.

The table also includes key development proposals related to each of the gaps, impediments to their implementation and recommended actions for the Murray Regional Tourism Board to facilitate development.

TABLE 2 PRODUCT GAPS AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Opportunity Theme	Product Gaps	Product Development Initiatives	Barriers to Implementation	MRTB Actions
The River	Riverfront tourism and activity precincts across the cities and towns in the Murray Region.	Riverfront project proposals in: Mildura, Swan Hill, Albury, Koondrook, Tocumwal, Corowa, Barham and Gateway Island.	Planning, private financing, Government funding.	Support Councils and communities proposing riverfront redevelopment projects, in the large as well as small population centres
	River access, including riverside tracks and trails, boat access, parking and visitor amenities.	River Access project as part of Ports of the Murray. Elements of the River Red Gum development plans.	Determining project scope and inclusions, south bank border issues, coordination	Support the formation of a working group to develop a river bank infrastructure plan.
	The Murray Region provides little encouragement for touring along the river through designated touring routes and itineraries.	Murray Valley Trail Murray Adventure Trail Themed touring Routes Hub and spoke touring loops	Identification of key touring destinations, resources for marketing and promotion, signage and mapping.	Work with the Murray Darling Association to promote the Murray Valley Trail Work with the Parks services on both sides of the river to identify and promote adventure opportunities Include the trail and itineraries on Murray Tourism website.
National and State Parks, Nature based and indigenous tourism	Recognition of the Murray as a unique part of the Australian geography.	Australia's National Landscapes	Availability of resources to prepare submissions	Prepare an application for submission to Australia's National Landscapes, with assistance from Local and State Government Stakeholders.
	A signature nature-based and indigenous attraction, that promotes the Murray as a international tourist destination	Lake Mungo all weather road Lake Mungo visitor centre	Cost of infrastructure, conservation concerns	Provide support to the development through information sharing, promotion and marketing support. Work with tourism operators to develop packages that make the most of the Western Murray as an accessible outback experience, with Mungo as its signature experience.
	Many of the Parks and Reserves along the river have recently been converted from State Forests, and therefore require investment to meet their full tourism potential.	NSW and Victorian River Red Gum Parks development programs are underway. High ropes experience, eco-lodges, tracks and trails.	Funding, possible conservation conflicts. Private partnerships for some NSW initiatives.	Continue to work with Parks Victoria and Parks NSW to promote the development of visitor experiences in the region's Parks and Reserves, including; indigenous sites, walking, cycling and canoe trails, bird watching, access, camp sites and amenity blocks. Provide ongoing support to the project as a conduit between State Government Authorities, promotional and marketing support.

Opportunity Theme	Product Gaps	Product Development Initiatives	Barriers to Implementation	MRTB Actions
Golf Infrastructure and Facilities	There is a need to have golf courses that can accommodate higher yielding visitors, particularly international tourists. The Murray Region is competing against more recently developed courses located closer to metropolitan centres, and needs to provide a package of similar quality.	International visitor ready golfing resorts Diversify accommodation to meet a range of visitor needs Review dining options at golf resorts against consumer demands	Sourcing investment funding, increased competition in the golf tourism market, declining participation rates, existing operator attitudes to investment.	Undertake targeted golf market research. Facilitate and encourage golf course investment. Investigate the potential of developing an investment manual for golf courses. Highlight the need for further investment through providing information on the golf market competition and consumer preferences.
Food and Wine	There are few unique and/or destination dining experiences in the Murray Region, particularly restaurants that have river views. Although the region has a strong agricultural sector, there are a limited number of cellar doors and farm gate experiences. Visitor access to the region's product is limited	Corowa Chocolate Factory Koondrook Goods Store Proposal Riverfront development projects A range of smaller tourism products; cellar doors, farm gate and meet the maker, providores in towns, goods vans during camping peak periods.	Planning and permits, lack of suitable locations and buildings, funding, difficulty of new ventures competing with established clubs More large scale corporate operations than boutique producers, lack of understanding of demand and benefits, needs a concentration of product to create a visitor experience (ie: a food and wine touring route, not just one provider).	Promote riverfront dining opportunities to councils considering riverfront development projects. Link potential developers to grant opportunities - TQual, RDV/RDA etc. Provide support to Gannawarra Council in the conversion of the Goods Shed into a unique dining experience Provide support to the private developer to gain required approvals and permits to ensure the Corowa Chocolate Factory meets its full potential Promote agricultural tourism opportunities through information sessions and study tours. Identify key regions for promotion of the benefits of food and wine tourism opportunities. Investigate the development of a Murray food and wine brand to support the development of tourism opportunities.
History, Heritage and Culture	Lack of cultural facilities targeted to higher yielding markets. Generally poor interpretation and development of secondary heritage products.	Port of Echuca Redevelopment Phase 2 and 3 Albury Cultural Precinct and Albury Regional Art Gallery Upgrade Corowa Federation Museum, Holbrook Submarine Museum, Deniliquin Ute Museum, the Echuca Art Gallery and the Murray Open House Festivals.	Funding Funding, cost of preparing feasibility studies and funding submissions, ongoing management and resourcing.	Provide support to the Campaspe Shire in obtaining funding for further development of Echuca's tourism precinct. Provide support to the Albury City Council in promoting the opportunities and development of this cultural precinct The development of heritage product in a range of locations on the Murray should be supported through assistance with promoting the opportunities listed under Product Development Initiatives.
Festivals, Events and Conferences	No coordinated effort to raise to profile of fishing in the Murray Region.	Murray Fishing League	Resourcing, funding, parochialism	Initially, MRTB would assess the level of interest from existing competitions with a view to forming a development committee. Further work would involve identifying major sponsors, coordination, and linking the committee to funding opportunities and stakeholders.

Opportunity Theme	Product Gaps	Product Development Initiatives	Barriers to Implementation	MRTB Actions
	<p>There are many events in the Murray Region, but few that draw large patronage and create awareness of the region. There is a need for a coordinated approach to the development of events that draw new visitors to the region.</p>	<p>Consolidated Event Strategy The North West Motor Sport Development Strategy</p>	<p>Coordination with Councils, resourcing, planning (Swan Hill motor sport facility is within a Farming Zone)</p>	<p>Dedicate Murray Regional Tourism Board resources to the development of a Murray events strategy. The strategy should identify the resources required to promote and develop major events across all sectors in the Murray Region. The strategy should also consider the establishment of a dedicated Murray events unit.</p> <p>New or recently initiated festivals that should be considered for inclusion in this strategy include the Albury Wodonga Arts Festival, and the Waking Up The Spirit Festival held at Culpra Station, near Euston, events connected to the Murray's key attributes as well as nationally focussed music festivals.</p> <p>Provide support to the Councils included in the Motor Sport Development Strategy to ensure that the project meets its full tourism potential. Include major motor sport events in the consolidated strategy.</p>
<p>Accommodation</p>	<p>Poor diversity of the accommodation offer in the Murray Region, to meet a wide range of visitor needs</p> <p>There is limited accommodation in the region that provides visitors with an experience of the river.</p> <p>There is a gap in conference facilities in the region, particularly in locations with large accommodation capacity, good access from capital cities and supporting tourism product.</p>	<p>Backpackers in Albury, Swan Hill, Yarrawonga.</p> <p>Serviced apartments in Swan Hill</p> <p>Boutique, high quality accommodation in strategic locations</p> <p>Eco-lodges</p> <p>Branded accommodation visible in the international wholesale market.</p> <p>Include accommodation in riverfront development projects.</p> <p>Echuca 5 Star Resort and Conference Centre</p> <p>Conference facility within the Mildura Riverfront project</p>	<p>Ready investors, difficulty in sourcing finance, oversupply of 3 and 3 1/1 star hotels reducing rates.</p> <p>Planning, lack of suitable locations and buildings, financing private development</p> <p>Financing, increasing competition in the conference and event market</p>	<p>Ensure accommodation is included in the development of an investment prospectus for the Murray. The prospectus will bring together research and information to prospective investors. This would draw on information from the Tourism Development Plan.</p> <p>Link potential developers to grant opportunities - TQual, RDV/RDA etc.</p> <p>Promote riverfront dining opportunities to councils considering riverfront development projects.</p> <p>Link potential developers to grant opportunities - TQual, RDV/RDA etc.</p> <p>Murray Regional Tourism Board can provide support to the Echuca proposal by providing supporting information, acting as a conduit to government agencies and promotional and marketing support.</p> <p>Promote the conference opportunity as part of the Mildura Riverfront in conjunction with the Mildura Council.</p>

TIER 3 PROJECTS

The majority of Tier 3 projects are in the National and State Parks, Festivals, Events and Conferences and Accommodation categories.

Many of these projects have not been included in Tier 1 or 2 as their impact is expected to be at a community level, or support existing visitors rather than attracting new visitors and markets. Also, much like Tier 2 projects, many are of a smaller size and scope than the Tier 1 Priority Projects. The inclusion of a project in Tier 3 should not be seen as precluding it from proceeding, rather the onus should be with local communities and Councils to bring them to fruition.

All of the proposals for new interpretive and visitor centres are in Tier 3. This is based on two factors impacting on the sustainability of these centres: firstly, there is trend towards visitors using the internet for travel research both prior to and while on their trips, and secondly, many of these centres are not financially sustainable, and are becoming burdens for Local Governments and communities. These factors should be taken in to account before assessing the scope and demand for new visitor or interpretation centres.

Many of the projects in National and State Parks will provide infrastructure and additional amenity to support the needs of visitors. Taken individually, they will have a marginal impact on tourism to the region, but based on the research findings, when combined the developments across all of the Parks in the Murray Region, can realise increases in visitation and length of stay in the region.

Eco-lodges are an interesting proposition for the Murray Region. Although they provide signature experiences and can act to highlight the natural attractions, due to their sustainability credentials they are generally of limited capacity, reducing their impact on the broader industry. Though they have not been included in higher Tiers, their development should be pursued as they will add diversity to the accommodation and experiences on offer.

The Echuca Bridge Arts Project may become a major attraction for the Murray, and provide an impetus for visitation from new market segments. Its inclusion in Tier 3 is not a reflection on this possibility, but rather that it is too early in its development to have a clear view on its impact. In particular, it is difficult to assess the proposal before the new Echuca-Moama bridge has a confirmed location and has been fully funded. This project should be revisited once the underlying infrastructure development has been confirmed.

The inclusion of a number of the festivals and events in Tier 3 is due to the assessment under Criterion 2: Visitation, Length of Stay and/or Yield, which is one of the highest weighting

criteria. As discussed in Part 2 of this document, the Murray Region receives over 5,000,000 visitors per year: it is difficult for an event over one or two days to have a significant impact in this context. Horse Racing Carnivals are already held in a range of locations in the region: further development or promotion may not provide commensurate benefits, although as they are an attractor of younger market segments they should be supported in the future.

Overall, these projects should be assessed in the context of how they support the continued development of tourism destinations. The purpose of this project is to identify projects that increase visitation and length of stay in the Murray Region: this can not only be achieved by single large investments but also by a range of small developments such as those included here and within the broad initiatives discussed in the following section

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION

This section of the report provides a summary of the findings included in the Murray Region Tourism Destination Management Plan Research Paper. The research and consultation has provided the basis for understanding the broad categories of development opportunities that will have the most impact on the region's tourism industry. For further details and explanation of the research and consultation process and findings please refer to the Research Paper produced in conjunction with this report.

1.2. METHODOLOGY

The research undertaken for the project includes:

- A review of Federal, State and Local Government policy and strategy;
- An audit of tourism product in the Murray Region;
- Visitor demand analysis; and
- Visitation forecasts.

Consultation was undertaken across the Murray Region and consisted of the following:

- 13 Workshops with Local Government and industry stakeholders held in Swan Hill, Corowa, Echuca, Albury, Cobram and Mildura, attended by 108 persons;
- Interviews and meetings with over 30 stakeholders in the Murray Region, including State Government, local developers, sporting and RSL clubs;
- 150 responses to the Murray Tourism Business Survey;
- 20 responses to a survey of VIC staff; and
- 170 responses from a Murray Region visitor survey.

The consultation process was used to understand what stakeholders considered to be the key gaps and or opportunities in product and infrastructure development in the Murray Region and the key barriers to tourism investment.

In addition, a market research exercise has been undertaken with key origin markets for the Murray Region. The aim of the research was to understand the travel perceptions and motivations of visitors and non-visitors to the Murray Region.

1.3. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions have been drawn from the research and consultation:

- Federal, State and Local Government policy provides strong support for investment as a driver for tourism growth;
- The review of Local Government documents has identified a range of projects for consideration, which are included within this report;
- Visitation to the Murray has declined over the past decade, although there is an indication that following the end of the drought in the last few years, visitation is increasing;
- The main decline in visitation has been in people aged under 45;
- Projected visitation over the next decade supports the need for both investment and change, as the growth projections indicate that visitation will not return to the levels of a decade ago without it;
- The product audit has identified Golf and History and Heritage as primary strengths of the region: this does not reflect the findings of the visitor survey or the perception of the Murray Regional Tourism Board;
- The Murray has a large accommodation capacity, but there are many 3 to 3 ½ star motels that require refurbishment to retain market competitiveness; and

- The most significant barrier to investment in the region is the difficulty in obtaining finance for regional tourism projects. Other barriers identified include the cost of feasibility and pre-feasibility studies, planning restrictions, staff issues and cross border issues.

In addition to these issues, the following opportunities for tourism development were also evident in the results of the research and consultation:

- There is a need to reinvest in and establish a range of new tourism product across the Murray: many areas lack a range of visitor activities and many of the existing products are in need of a refresh. This was seen as a significant impact on the appeal of the Murray Region as a family destination;
- The waterfront and the river has been underused and undersold to visitors, and presents the main opportunity for development, including improved visitor access;
- Closely aligned to this are the opportunities to promote nature based and eco-tourism in the National and State Parks in the region
- Conferences, events and festivals may provide reasons for new visitors to come to the region, and also promote seasonal and regional dispersal of visitation;
- The Murray Region is a major agricultural and wine production region, yet this has not been translated into a range of tourism products or products carrying a "Murray River" brand; and
- There is a need to diversify the accommodation stock in the region, and there is demand for more accommodation on the riverfront.

2. STRATEGY REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This section provides a summary of the Federal, State and Local Government strategies and policies reviewed to inform the development of the Murray Region Tourism Destination Management Plan. A more detailed review of these documents is included in the Research Paper developed in association with this report.

Much of the focus of Federal and State Government tourism policy is on experience development, particularly on unique experiences and landscapes that a region can offer.

The Murray's unique experiences which should be the focus are:

- **The Murray River itself;**
- **Unique river craft:** houseboats, paddle steamers;
- River red gum forests;
- Inland river ports; and
- Mungo National Park.

2.2. FEDERAL POLICY

There is strong support from the Australian Government for growth related to the tourism sector. The National Long Term Tourism Strategy sets out a framework which provides support for tourism product and tourism related development. **The Government's 2009 National Long Term Tourism Strategy identifies that in order for Australia to remain competitive in the Global tourism market; continued investment is required to deliver quality sustainable tourism product and services that provide visitors with compelling tourist experiences.**

2.3. STATE POLICY

2.3.1. TOURISM VICTORIA

Tourism Victoria is the primary body responsible for governing tourism policy direction and development in Victoria. Tourism Victoria is committed to securing Victoria's long term tourism future and supporting the delivery of quality infrastructure across Regional Victoria.

Tourism Victoria's Regional Tourism Action Plan 2009 - 2012 addresses cross-regional issues and confirms priorities for each of Victoria's ten tourism regions. **At the core of its strategy is the objective of improving the supply and quality of tourism experiences.** It particularly seeks to secure investment and infrastructure priorities around Victoria's natural asset base and the tourism strengths of each region, advance priority investment projects identified for each region and ensure that tourism projects continue to be a priority in Government investment and infrastructure planning.

Tourism Victoria's Regional Tourism Action Plan identifies the following key projects for development in the Murray Region:

- **High quality accommodation with large capacity integrated with a regional conference facility (Mildura, Wodonga and Yarrawonga);**
- Nature-based infrastructure and investment product along the Murray River, including consideration of a river trail with appointed visitor accommodation (similar to the Great Ocean Walk model);
- Tourism infrastructure and product to support the Port of Echuca as a heritage port and Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement;
- Implementation of the Mildura Riverfront Masterplan to create a riverside tourism precinct that integrates the Mildura CBD with the Murray River and marina; and
- Completion of Bonegilla Migrant Centre experience.

2.3.2. DESTINATION NSW

The major strategy for tourism development in NSW is Towards 2020: New South Wales Tourism Masterplan¹. This strategy notes that for tourism to meet its full potential it needs to be perceived as an attractive investment option, and that government need to be involved in promoting the opportunities and benefits of tourism investment. There is a need to promote investment to improve tourism product including accommodation, built and natural attractions and tour operations. Towards 2020 sees the role for government in promoting investment in the industry as providing information, marketing, development incentives, planning frameworks and public infrastructure.

Significantly for regional NSW, this strategy also highlights the opportunities for tourism products and experiences related to non-tourism businesses such as transportation, mining and agriculture.

2.3.3. STATE PARKS AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

The NSW Parks and Wildlife Service and Parks Victoria have prepared a range of tourism development plans for the National and State Parks in the Murray Region. Tourism development plans for the areas recently converted from State Forests, such as Barmah, Millewa and Gunbower are particularly important, as they recommend infrastructure to support the ongoing use of the areas by visitors.

2.4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Many of the towns along the Murray River are currently undertaking masterplanning or redevelopment of their river interfaces, including Mildura, Swan Hill, Robinvale, Koondrook, Echuca, Tocumwal, Corowa, Albury and Wodonga. These projects include tourism product and infrastructure, such as accommodation and hospitality, improved river access, parks and bike and walking trails.

Other recurring themes in the Local Government product and infrastructure development proposals include:

- Increased or upgraded boat ramps and river access;
- Cycling and walking trails;

- Themed touring routes, such as nature based, history and heritage and food and wine;
- State and National Parks;
- Streetscaping and attracting increased visitation through improvements to town entrances;
- Improved tourism related signage;
- Interpretive Centres, particularly in the NSW municipalities; and
- Most areas are looking to increase visitation through events.

¹ Destination NSW, 2002.

3. VISITOR DEMAND ANALYSIS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This section provides a summary of the extensive analysis of visitation trends included in the Research Paper. The majority of the information is extracted from the National Visitor Survey and International Visitor Survey, conducted by Tourism Research Australia.

The analysis of visitation trends provides insights into the overall performance of the industry over the past decade, both in the Murray Region and in comparison to the State, demographic trends, preferred visitor activities and market segments. In addition, the information is used to project visitation to the Murray over the forthcoming decade.

3.1.1. METHODOLOGY

The main data source used in the analysis of visitation to the Murray Region is the surveys undertaken by Tourism Research Australia, the National Visitor Survey and the International Visitor Survey. Where applicable, data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics is used to support the analysis.

NATIONAL VISITOR SURVEY (NVS)

Tourism Research Australia is responsible for conducting the National Visitor Survey. 120,000 Australian residents are interviewed annually about their travel for the NVS, capturing interstate and intrastate visitation. The information NVS includes visitor destinations, origins, activities, nights spent, travel methods, activities and expenditure.

Daytrips are only included in the NVS if the respondent travelled more than 50 kms from their residence, and spent more than 4 hours at the destination.

INTERNATIONAL VISITOR SURVEY (IVS)

Tourism Research Australia also conducts the International Visitor Survey. The IVS is conducted in the departure lounges of eight international airports in Australia: Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Cairns, Perth, Adelaide, Darwin and the Gold Coast. 40,000 departing tourists are interviewed about their time in Australia.

NOTES ON DATA ANALYSIS

- "Murray Region" is used to refer to the entire study area for this project, which is then split into the 5 sub-regions described in 0.
- To account for small sample size, and to even out results when making comparisons across the past decade, averages of the years 2001 to 2003 and 2009 to 2011 are used.
- Unless noted, references to years should be read as the calendar year, ie: January to December.
- When comparing the five regions within the Murray Region, visitor nights is used in preference to the number of visitors, as this avoids the counting of one visitor several times if they stay in various locations in the region.

3.2. ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Whilst the overall decline in overnight visitation to the Murray Region can be attributed to Australian wide trends, there are some local changes in the Murray market in the past ten years which cannot be attributed wholly to broader macro-economic trends. These include:

- The decline in family market to the Western and Mid-Western areas of the Murray.
- The extent of the decline of visitors aged 15 to 44 across the entire Murray Region.

In order for the Murray Region to regain its position in the marketplace for these segments, a deliberate effort is required in developing and refreshing product which engages with these markets.

There is likely to be the greatest demand from existing visitors to the Murray Region for tourism product which fits into the following categories:

- Product that provides opportunity for social interaction/ engagement such as pubs, restaurants, shopping, events facilities; and

- Product that allows visitors to engage better with nature and the outdoors, such as walking trails, fishing/boating infrastructure, guided tours, guided walks, cycling trails.

Based on the market preferences of the key segments to the Murray, experience improvements for consideration include:

- Improved dining, local produce and wine experience targeting socially, aware segments and visible achievement;
- Formalised nature based tourism including tracks and trails targeting traditional family life and socially aware segments; and
- Authentic heritage offer targeting socially aware and traditional family life segments.

Visitor projections highlight that without targeting product and marketing towards younger segments, the Murray Region will have limited growth over the next 10 years.

Whilst the older domestic segments are critical for the Murray Region going forward, in order for the Murray Region to grow in visitation and yield, the Murray Region needs to make a considered effort towards:

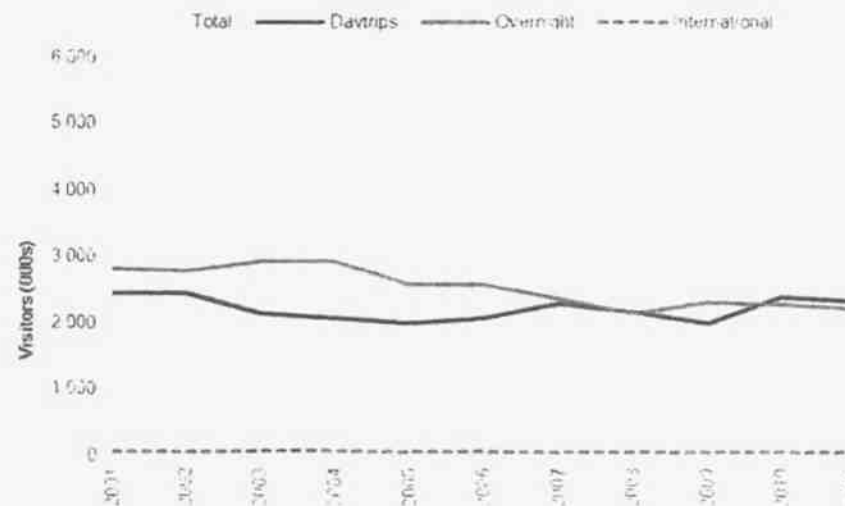
- International visitors through further development and promotion of its icons; and
- Mid-life adults and young families through refreshing the existing product offer with a focus on food and wine, heritage and nature based tourism.

3.3. VISITATION

In 2011 the Murray Region attracted around 4.5 million visitors; approximately half of those were overnight stays. The region has experienced a significant decline in visitation over the past 10 years, particularly in overnight stays, and visitors aged 15 to 44 years of age.

Whilst there was an overall decline across the Murray Region in the last ten years, some Murray sub regions performed better than others. In particular, daytrip visitation grew in the Eastern Murray and Mid-Eastern Murray, whilst the Western Murray and Mid-Western Murray had marked decline in daytrip visitation. The decline in overnight visitors impacted on all sub regions of the river.

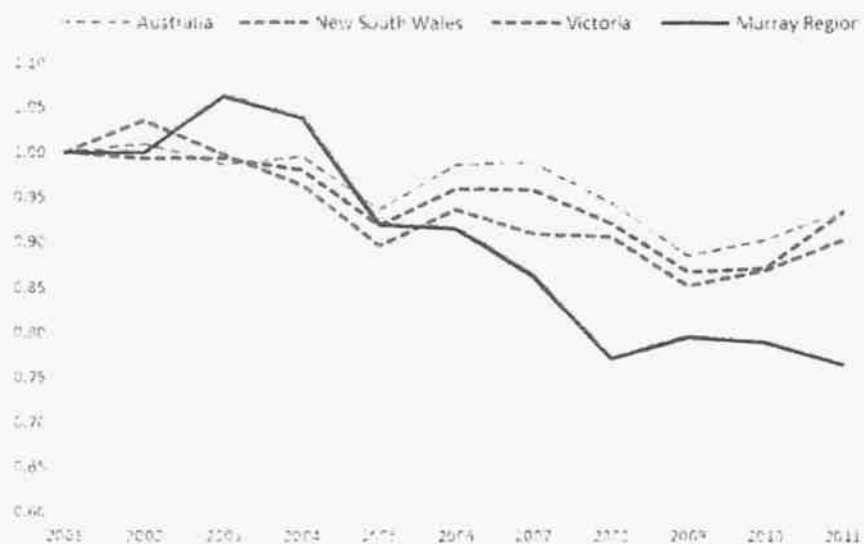
FIGURE 2 VISITATION TO THE MURRAY REGION 2001-2011



It is important to consider the broader trends in tourism when considering visitation to the Murray. The trend in reduced overnight visitation is shared with most tourism regions in Australia, and has occurred at the same time as the substantial growth in Australians undertaking international trips. Some hypotheses around the decline of overnight domestic visitation in Australia include:

- Growth in domestic outbound visitation as a result of the Australian Dollar and the low cost international flights.
- Australian's preference for short trips rather than long trips.
- The global financial crisis encouraging older Australians to travel less due to decreased superannuation.

FIGURE 3 INDEXED OVERNIGHT VISITATION TO AUSTRALIA, NSW, VICTORIA AND THE MURRAY REGION 2001-2011



3.4. DEMOGRAPHICS

The visitor demographic across the Murray Region was relatively consistent, with the prominent groups being those aged 45-64 years and 25-44 years. The Western Murray had a significantly lower level of persons aged 15-24 and 65+ than the other sub regions. Its isolation from key markets and an airport differentiates the area and its tourism market.

The major domestic market for the Murray is Melbourne, followed by Regional Victoria, Regional NSW and Sydney. South Australia is a relatively minor market across the Murray Region, but is more prominent in the Western Murray and Mid Western Murray.

International visitation is low, with key groups being backpackers and touring visitors from traditional locations including New Zealand, the UK, Continental Europe and North

America. The Murray Region receives a significantly lower proportion of visitors from Asian countries than Australia overall.

3.5. ACTIVITIES

Key activity segments from the NVS that existing visitors to the Murray Region engage in include:

- Eat out at restaurants;
- General sightseeing;
- Pubs clubs discos etc;
- Go shopping (pleasure);
- Visit friends and relatives;
- Go fishing;
- Visit history heritage buildings sites or monuments;
- Bushwalking or rainforest walks;
- Visit national parks or State parks;
- Visit museums or art galleries;
- Go on a daytrip to another place; and
- Water activities or sports.

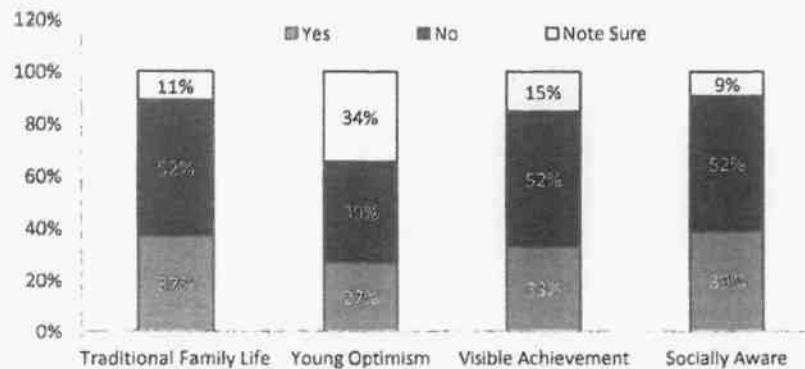
The proportion of visitors undertaking most of these activities is higher than in regional Victoria and regional NSW, highlighting both the availability of product and the high level of participation in activities of visitors to the Murray Region. The only activities which rank lower in participation than the regional Victorian average are "visiting national or state parks" and bushwalking or rainforest walks. This highlights that whilst the natural assets are present in the region, they are not being utilised to the same extent when compared with other regions in NSW and Victoria.

Participation data also suggests that whilst visitors to the Murray undertake active participation in the outdoors, the key activities are indoor activities linked to the townships, such as eating out, pubs/clubs discos and shopping.

3.6. MARKET SEGMENTS

The Roy Morgan Values Segments research included in Tourism Victoria's Regional Awareness and Perception Study suggests that in three of the key Victorian market segments, between 33% and 39% have visited the Murray in the past five years, as shown in Figure 4. Although the NVS visitation data does not provide information on these market segments, Traditional Family Life and Conventional Family Life have been the traditional high visitation Roy Morgan Values Segments.

FIGURE 4 ROY MORGAN VALUES SEGMENTS: VISITED ONCE IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS



Whilst it is important for the Murray Region to maintain and improve its strength in product provision for Traditional Family Life and Conventional Family Life segments, there is an opportunity to develop product that appeals to the higher yielding segments such as Visible Achievement and Socially Aware.

In addition, the Murray Region has not diversified its product mix to the same extent when compared to traditional beach side destinations such as the Mornington Peninsula and

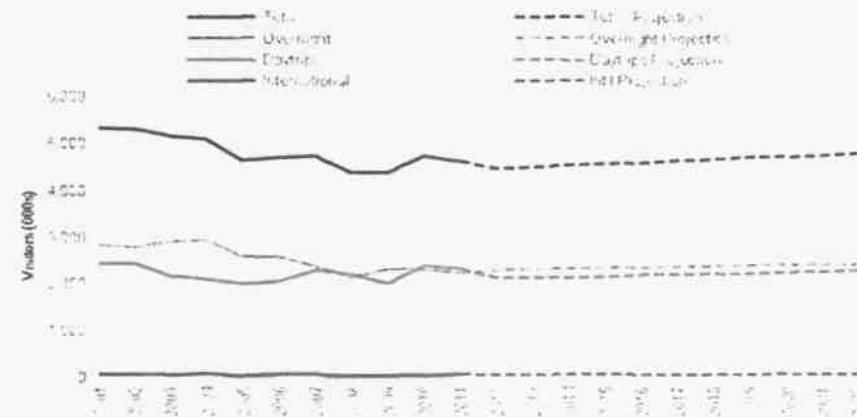
the Bellarine Peninsula. This shortfall in new development impacts on the Murray Region's competitiveness when trying to attract these higher yielding segments.

In addition, the Murray Region and its destinations rank very low in unprompted awareness for all of the key Roy Morgan Visitor Segments, other than Traditional Family Life. This suggests that the product and destinations are not targeting younger and mid-life segments as well as the older segments.

3.7. VISITOR FORECASTS

The total visitation projected for the Murray is based on the trends plus population growth for domestic visitation and the logarithmic projection plus Tourism Forecasting Committee growth forecasts. For the Murray Region, this results in a small growth projection over the following decade, and amounts to an additional 4% of visitors by 2022. The projected total visitation for 2020, 4.7 million, is still less than in the years up to 2004 when over 5 million visitors were attracted to the Murray region annually.

FORECAST VISITATION TO THE MURRAY REGION



Overall, analysis of the changes in the age of visitors to the region indicates that there will be a continued aging of the visitors to the Murray region over the next decade. Between

4. DIRECT VISITOR RESEARCH

4.1. INTRODUCTION

To inform the Murray Region Tourism Development Plan project, Colmar Brunton were appointed to undertake market research with key origin markets for the Murray Region. The aim of the research was to understand the travel perceptions and motivations of visitors and non-visitors to the Murray Region:

The data provides information that identifies the characteristics of these groups and an understanding of what tourism product and infrastructure will motivate regular visitors to visit more often.

4.2. METHODOLOGY

Colmar Brunton received 1,000 responses to the survey conducted via the internet. The demographic mix is summarised in Table 6.

TABLE 6 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH DEMOGRAPHY

Demographic		% of Interviews	No. Interviews
Gender	Male	49%	490
	Female	51%	510
Age	Under 25 yrs	17%	170
	25 to 45 yrs	35%	350
	46 yrs plus	48%	480
Location	Metro Melbourne	40%	400
	Regional Victoria	20%	200
	Sydney	10%	100
	Regional NSW/Canberra	20%	200
	South Australia	10%	100
TOTAL			1,000

4.3. KEY FINDINGS

The key findings of the Quantitative Research to support the product development opportunities included in Part 2 are highlighted below:

- The main sources of visitors to the Murray Region are Melbourne and Regional Victoria;
- Costs are an important factor in travel decisions, which supports the recommendations for both back packers and serviced apartments;
- That the natural attributes of the region, although significant, are not prominent in the tourism marketplace;
- Survey respondents indicated that they didn't believe the Murray Region offered strong food and wine experiences;
- Overall, the experiences that are most likely to generate additional visitation were found to be:
 - Escaping into the natural world;
 - Touring routes; and,
 - History and heritage products;
- Also, food and wine and high quality and unique accommodation may attract visitors who have not travelled to the Murray Region before;
- Touring routes, adventure trails and local produce were identified as being more likely to attract higher income visitors.

4.6. INFLUENCE ON TRAVEL INTENTIONS

Nine holiday experiences were included in the survey; respondents were asked how they would influence their visitation to the Murray Region. The experiences were tailored to provide insight into the possible impact that the development opportunities discussed in Part 2 of this report may have in the tourism market place.

Data included in Table 14 indicates how these experiences will impact on travel intentions: the experience's likelihood of attracting new visitors to the region is taken into account as well as the likelihood of visitation. **This data provides strongest support for riverfront developments, local produce, and touring routes, and the only experience with a significant less likely response is High adrenaline activities.**

Table 15 provides data on how the people more likely to travel to the Murray will change their intentions. The propensity to travel indicates how likely these experiences are to attract new visitors by combining more likely to travel responses and "Visit the Murray region specifically for this activity". Table 14 has this data for only those who have never been to the Murray before. The 6 experiences showing high propensity to generate travel to the Murray Region are:

- Escaping into the natural world, camping by the water, fishing and disappearing for a few days into the riverside forests.
- Discovering the range of high quality local produce on offer, food and/or wine.
- Making use of adventure trails along the river, walking, riding and/or canoeing.
- Learning about the settlement of the region and the boom years in the paddle steamer trade, and other significant events in the history of the Murray.
- Staying in high quality accommodation in a natural setting.
- Accessing routes that link different sites, creating an experience that allows you to tour the length of the river.

TABLE 13 IMPACT ON VISITATION

Experience	Lot More Likely	Little More Likely	No Change	Little Less Likely	Lot Less Likely
Dining overlooking a river, with hotels and cafes nearby. Boardwalks that open up to the water from the centre of town.	21%	43%	32%	3%	1%
Exploring ancient sites in the outback and discovering the unique and important history of this country.	17%	40%	37%	4%	2%
High adrenaline activities with lots of action, boats and cars.	6%	15%	48%	16%	15%
Escaping into the natural world, camping by the water, fishing and disappearing for a few days into the riverside forests.	16%	31%	38%	9%	6%
Discovering the range of high quality local produce on offer, food and/or wine.	23%	41%	33%	2%	1%
Making use of adventure trails along the river, walking, riding and/or canoeing.	13%	38%	38%	7%	4%
Learning about the settlement of the region and the boom years in the paddle steamer trade, and other significant events in the history of the Murray.	15%	39%	40%	5%	2%
Staying in high quality accommodation in a natural setting.	16%	38%	38%	5%	4%
Accessing routes that link different sites, creating an experience that allows you to tour the length of the river.	17%	42%	36%	3%	2%

5. CONSULTATION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This section provides a summary of the consultation undertaken to inform the identification of priority projects for the Murray Region. A more detailed summary is included in the Research Paper prepared in conjunction with this report.

The consultation process included:

- 13 Workshops with Local Government and industry stakeholders held in Swan Hill, Corowa, Echuca, Albury, Cobram and Mildura, attended by 108 persons.
- Interviews and meetings with over 30 stakeholders in the Murray Region, including State Government, local developers, sporting and RSL clubs.
- 150 responses to the Murray Tourism Business Survey;
- 20 responses to a survey of VIC staff; and
- 170 responses from a Murray Region visitor survey.

5.1.1. SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The results of the visitor survey are skewed, as over 70% of responses were collected in the Eastern Murray. Also, respondents to the survey were 10% more likely to be aged over 44 years than the NVS data for overall visitation to the Murray.

The Business Survey was also not equally representative across the region, with the Eastern and Western Murray providing more results than other areas. Also, over 40% of the responses were received from accommodation businesses.

5.2. OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED FOR PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The following are common themes for product and infrastructure development which were identified through consultation:

REFRESH OF TOURISM PRODUCT

It was acknowledged by industry that the tourism product and infrastructure in the Murray was generally tired. This includes caravan parks, motels, golf clubs and heritage attractions. Stakeholders believe there is a need for renewed investment in existing product and infrastructure in order for the Murray Region to continue competing with other tourism regions.

FAMILY PRODUCT

A shortage of product appealing to families was identified as a key area for improvement and development by Murray Stakeholders, particularly activities for families.

THE WATERFRONT

Many of the municipalities in the Region have been developing projects which provide new waterfront investment opportunities. These projects were widely supported by stakeholders.

NATURED BASED/ ECO-TOURISM

An overwhelming majority of businesses consulted believe that nature based product including eco-tourism, bird watching, guided walks and canoe trails present a significant opportunity for the Murray Region.

CONFERENCING, EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

Events, including business events and festivals were identified as a key development opportunity to combat seasonality.

LOCAL PRODUCE AND DINING

Visitor information centre staff respond to a significant number of enquires for local for local produce; however there is limited offer across much of the Murray Region.

WATER BASED INFRASTRUCTURE

Improvement to water infrastructure was also identified as a requirement of the region by businesses. This includes improved moorings, boat ramps and jetties.

DIVERSIFIED ACCOMMODATION STOCK

Visitor information centre staff identified a need for diversified accommodation, including accommodation overlooking the Murray River and Nature Based Accommodation.

There are a number of other specific projects that were identified through the consultation process which are listed in the project proposals section of this document.

5.3. BARRIERS TO INVESTMENT

Consultation with industry representatives has identified several issues that are impacting on further investment in tourism product and infrastructure in the Murray Region. These obstacles include: finance, uncertainty about the river's future, labour supply, differing legislation across borders and restrictions on land use, costs related to funding applications, public liability insurance, inability to compete with large clubs and accessibility to the region.

Finance is identified as a particular issue, as banks are seeing investments in both regional locations and tourism as high risk, indicating that when combined, regional tourism projects are unlikely to be funded through traditional finance.

The uncertainty of the river's future, both as a result of the prolonged drought and the Murray Darling Basin Plan, has had an impact on visitation and investor confidence in the region.

Labour supply is also identified as an issue, in terms of attraction, retention and training. The high number of younger people relocating to capitals and regional centres impacts on the availability of workers, particularly in the hospitality and accommodation areas. Many tourism operators also found the distances required to send staff to training and professional development opportunities also impacted on their businesses.

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 dependant 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.

Particularly for Local Government, the high cost of preparing concept proposals, strategic plans, feasibility studies, funding applications and business plans is seen as a significant barrier to undertaking infrastructure projects. Some council's found it difficult to prioritise the resourcing of these documents over their core activities, as they were not certain that they would obtain any funding as a result.

The increasing costs of public liability insurance have had a significant impact on tourism businesses in the Murray Region, and are a significant barrier to adventure and tour businesses entering the market. Anecdotally, the increased insurance costs have played a part in the closure of some business in the area, reducing the tourism product available.

In some regions, the low cost meals provided by the clubs are seen as a significant factor in the viability of new dining places and restaurants. New places that could not compete on price terms with the clubs were not supported by locals, and had not survived.

The accessibility of the region is also seen as a barrier to tourism investment. The comparison between the costs and time to reach the Murray in comparison to low-cost carrier options, such as other capital cities and south east Asian resorts impacts visitor market choices and the viability of developments.

Some of the barriers to investment are difficult for the Murray Regional Tourism Board to assist with; however there is opportunity for the Board to provide leadership in the following areas:

- Assisting smaller councils with advice/ templates for feasibility studies and business cases;
- Industry training and development;
- Cross border regulation issues;
- Public liability insurance, potentially through coordination of group purchase/ discount.

6.2. PRODUCT GAP THEMES

Through the product audit undertaken for the Murray Region and discussed in the following section of this report, the major themes for development in the Murray Region are:

- Complimentary tourism facilities at golf courses, particularly higher quality accommodation and clubhouse facilities;
- Complimentary facilities at wineries and other food producers; cellar doors/produce sales, accommodation, dining for example;
- Experience of heritage icons and secondary heritage product;
- Quality dining at key tourist destinations and regional centres;
- Infrastructure in Parks, including walking trails, canoe trails, mooring facilities;
- Large and iconic festivals and events, particularly at key accommodation nodes that have synergies with the product strengths of the Murray Region and the destination;
- Conference facilities at Mildura/Wentworth, Yarrawonga/Mulwala and Echuca/Moama; and
- Indigenous experience through new and improved infrastructure and interpretation.

6.3. PRODUCT STRENGTHS

Table 17 provides a comparison of four differing views of the tourism product strengths of the Murray:

- The Murray Regional Tourism Board's perception
- The results of the product audit,
- The results of the visitor survey undertaken at the region's Visitor Information Centres and other key locations; and,
- The results of the consumer research, which surveyed 1,000 people about holiday preferences and their perceptions of the Murray.

TABLE 17 COMPARATIVE PRODUCT STRENGTHS

Tourism Sector	MRTB	Product Audit	Visitor Survey	Consumer Research
Food and Wine	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Primary
Fishing	Primary	N/A	Secondary	Primary
Private Vehicle Touring	Primary	N/A	Secondary	N/A
Motorised Water Sports	Primary	N/A	Low	Primary
Houseboats	Primary	N/A	Secondary	N/A
Nature	Secondary	Secondary	Primary	Primary
Arts and Culture	Emerging	Emerging	Low	Low
Indigenous	Secondary	Emerging	Low	N/A
Golf	Primary	Primary	Secondary	Secondary
Adventure	Emerging	Emerging	Low	Secondary
History and Heritage	Primary/Secondary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Festivals and Events	Primary	Secondary	Secondary	N/A
Business Events	Secondary	Secondary	N/A	N/A

Generally, primary strengths are those in which the region has a strong competitive advantage. Secondary strengths have some presence but are not primary draw cards. Emerging strengths are those that may be developed into attractors for the region, as there are opportunities to develop these further. In some instances, secondary strengths may also be developed further to become primary strengths; such as nature based products for example.

6.4.1. PRIMARY TOURISM PRODUCT STRENGTHS

The audit of tourism product in the Murray Region highlights that the region has primary strengths in golf and history and heritage when compared with other destinations in Victoria and NSW. These tourism products are strong across many areas of the Murray.

Well-developed history and heritage product includes the Port of Echuca, Bonegilla Migrant Experience and Swan Hill's Pioneer Settlement. There is also a significant amount of underdeveloped heritage in the Murray, such as the Chaffey Trail in Mildura, Federation history in Corowa and the heritage ports in the Murray townships.

67 golf courses have been identified throughout the Murray region of various standards; stand out courses include Yarrowonga, Murray Downs and Rich River. While the quality of golf courses in the Murray region is generally high, the facilities associated with the golf courses have some potential for improvement.

6.4.2. SECONDARY TOURISM PRODUCT STRENGTHS

The Murray is Australia's largest wine producing region and is home to some of Australia's largest wine companies, but these wineries offer limited tourism experiences.

There are cellar doors dispersed throughout the region, some of which also have excellent tourist facilities such as Trentham Estate, however, the tourist offer is generally limited, particularly in the Western and Mid Western Murray. The gap presented here is the lack of tourism experience and infrastructure at many of the larger wineries, which are focused more on wine production than tourism. The strength of the Mid Eastern Murray as a wine region is somewhat due to its close proximity to Rutherglen, rather than the number of wineries within these municipalities. This is supported by comparison with other regions: There are 25 wineries on the Mornington Peninsula, 28 in Victoria's Pyrenees region², but there are only 13 wineries around Mildura, 5 of which do not offer tastings.

Whilst food production is a strength in the Murray Region, similar to wine there is limited access to local product and farm gate experiences. There are a limited number of signature restaurants in the region, with only Oscar Ws in Echuca and Stefano's in Mildura featuring in the Age Good Food Guide with Chef Hats. Tourism Victoria's Regional Tourism Action Plan identified food and wine product as a primary strength in

² Mornington Peninsula and Pyrenees data from the Australian Wine Regions website

the Murray, however the audit undertaken shows that quality local and fresh food product is generally not very accessible in the Murray Region or has limited tourism experience surrounding it. For these reasons, food is identified only as a secondary strength of the region.

Nature based tourism is identified by Tourism Victoria in its Regional Action Plan as an emerging strength of the Murray Region. Whilst it is emerging, the number of natural assets and the amount of informal nature based tourism suggests that nature based tourism is a secondary strength of the region. Further development of this strength is linked to the recent transfer of river red gum State Forests to National Parks. The key gap for nature based tourism is formalised tourism product and infrastructure within the Murray Region's Parks.

Some well-known events in the Murray region include the Southern 80 and Deniliquin Ute Muster; however there are limited examples of other events throughout the Murray Region that have the same level of attraction for tourists. Therefore, festivals and events are identified as a secondary strength in the Murray Region.

6.4.3. EMERGING TOURISM PRODUCT

Arts and culture, currently a secondary strength in the Western Murray and Eastern Murray, is not as well developed throughout the Central Murray sub regions. It is an emerging product in the Murray Region, with opportunities for further development.

Indigenous product is considered a secondary strength in the Western Murray. There are some nodes where there are opportunities to develop indigenous product, particularly in the National and State Parks such as Lake Mungo, Millewa and Barmah.

Adventure product is largely undeveloped in the Murray Region; however there are some nodes where adventure businesses can be found, with an emerging node in Western Murray and the Mid Eastern Murray.

6.5. ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation audit of the Murray region has identified 830 accommodation establishments with a capacity to accommodate approximately 67,222 people: over 43,000 of this capacity are within caravan and camping sites. Anecdotally, there is a significant amount of informal camping sites in the region; the capacity associated with this camping cannot be quantified and is therefore excluded from this total capacity.

TABLE 22 MURRAY TOURISM GAPS: PRODUCT AUDIT

	Nature Based And Indigenous	Golf	Food and Wine	History, Heritage and Culture	Festivals Events and Conferences	Accommodation
Western Murray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous art gallery Indigenous cultural experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International standard facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riverfront dining Farm gate and produce sales Cellar doors and onsite restaurants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalised interpretation of history and heritage Indigenous art gallery/ experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous arts festival Large indoor events venue in Mildura 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High quality backpackers Nature based/eco accommodation
Mid-Western Murray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NBT tour operators Outdoor education operators and facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International standard facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm gate and product sales Cellar doors and onsite restaurants 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High quality backpackers Nature based/eco accommodation Self-contained accommodation
Central Murray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks infrastructure: tracks, trails river access facilities, toilets Technical mountain bike trails Outdoor education operators and facilities Indigenous interpretation in National Parks NBT tour operators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International standard facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm gate and product sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art gallery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large indoor events venue in Echuca 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature based/eco accommodation 4.5+ star international branded resort
Mid-Eastern Murray			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destination/ signature dining 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High quality backpackers
Eastern Murray		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International standard facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destination/ signature dining 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts and cultural festival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-contained business accommodation
Key Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor education operators Indigenous interpretation in National Parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International standard facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destination/ signature dining Quality cellar door facilities and onsite restaurants 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Music Festivals Outdoor adventure/NBT events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B&Bs Farm Stays Backpackers Branded accommodation Self contained accommodation

2. DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Objective: To strengthen the Murray's destinations through development of engaging visitor activities, investment in quality tourist infrastructure and appealing townships.

2.1. THE OPPORTUNITY

One of the main findings of the research and consultation is that many locations along the Murray do not offer a broad range of activities; this has been summarised as the need to develop tourism destinations.

By creating diverse experiences through a number of smaller product developments, increased visitation and an extended length of stay will be encouraged. Research indicates that this range of products and experiences is particularly important for the family market, which seeks a range of activities that appeal to both children and adults.

The development of a series of tourism destinations throughout the Murray Region is also important in promoting touring along the Murray. The more appealing destinations, particularly if they offer different and unique experiences, will provide a strong motivator for multi-day touring through the region.

The initiatives that align closely with the overarching theme of this report, making more of the river and the associated National Parks, are those that should be prioritised. These are:

1. Designated swimming areas;
2. Riverfront Accommodation;
3. Riverfront Dining; and
4. Tracks and Trails, particularly those that provide river experiences.

The implementation of many smaller projects in key locations will be as important to the long term development of the Murray Region's tourism industry as the prominent projects included in Tier 1.

2.2. DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The destination development opportunities have been aligned to the product development opportunity segments included in Part 2, and are discussed below⁷.

The reason for including these here is to highlight their overall importance to tourism development in the Murray Region, and that specific projects that align with these initiatives should be strongly considered for support and/or funding.

These recommendations should be read in conjunction with the projects included in Tier 2 and 3, as they provide the basis for the creation of unique destinations along the river, offering a mix of experiences to meet a wide range of market segments.

2.2.1. THE RIVER

RIVER ACCESS

The need for improved and increased access to the river was a recurrent theme throughout consultation, with the need for more and upgraded boating facilities in key locations, fishing platforms, canoe landings, improved roads and trails for visitors to get to and experience the river and better visitor amenity once at the river.

This has also been included as a project, as a consolidated and strategic approach to river access may be successful in applying for regional development funding, and provide opportunities to promote the region as a water-based holiday destination.

DESIGNATED SAFE SWIMMING AREAS

There are several risk factors in swimming in inland waters and the Murray River in particular, including strong currents, submerged snags, variable water depths and boats and water craft on the river. The introduction of designated safe swimming areas on the

⁷ Note that there were no strategic initiatives identified in the History, Heritage and Culture segment.

rivers and lakes in the Murray Region may make the area more appealing to visitors, families in particular.

The provision of safe swimming areas will also provide visitors with the opportunity to develop confidence in the water, encouraging repeat visitation to undertake more adventurous activities.

TOURING ROUTES

The development of touring routes, which could be thematic along the river, or loops providing tourism product in key destinations may encourage more visitors to explore the Murray Region, and increase visitor yield.

2.2.2. NATIONAL AND STATE PARKS: NATURAL AND INDIGENOUS PRODUCT

TRACKS AND TRAILS

In addition to the Loddon Mallee Trails Network and those included in the Murray Valley Trail, the provision of tracks and trails along the rivers, through the Parks and Reserves and between the cities and towns will attract the increasing active tourism market. Cycling in particular is a rapidly growing activity.

CAMPING AND VISITOR FACILITIES

As many of the National and State Parks in the Murray Region have only recently been transferred over from State Forests, much of the visitor infrastructure requires upgrading to improve visitor amenity and also protect the environment.

This includes clearly defined camping and day visitor areas, toilets, roads within the park, signage and access to the water.

BIRD WATCHING INFRASTRUCTURE

Bird watching facilities have been identified as providing additional visitor activities, promoting increased length of stay in a variety of locations in the Murray Region, including:

- Millewa and Barmah National Parks, particularly Mathoura

- Balranald
- Kerang Lakes
- Hattah Kulkynie National Park

Specific projects include Reeds Bed Bird Hide, Moira Bird Hole, viewing platforms at Kerang Lake, and bird trails and hides at Balranald.

INDIGENOUS INTERPRETATION AND SITE DEVELOPMENT

There are many sites with important indigenous heritage in the Murray Region that are not recognised or promoted as visitor destinations. The Murray provides a more accessible location to access indigenous cultural experiences than Central Australia and there is an opportunity to increase visitors in specific target markets through product development and partnership with local communities.

2.2.3. GOLF

ACCOMMODATION AND CLUBHOUSE UPGRADES

There was a widespread view expressed throughout the consultation process that many of the Golf Resort accommodation and club houses need investment to succeed in an increasingly competitive market. Over the past ten years there have been many private golf course developments in close proximity to Melbourne, the primary origin of Murray Golfers. These developments, in areas such as the Mornington and Bellarine Peninsulas, are providing high quality courses and facilities within two hours drive of the city. With lower airfares, areas such as the Gold Coast and northern Tasmania now compete with the Murray in terms of cost and ease of access.

Although some clubs have invested in the facilities associated with the golf courses, many have not. In order to capture new markets, particularly the Baby Boomers, who are stereotypically more demanding than their predecessors, clubs need to refresh their accommodation and clubhouse facilities.

2.2.4. FOOD AND WINE

RIVERFRONT DINING

There is a need for more signature dining experiences across the Murray Region and particularly those that make the most of picturesque and unique locations on the river. Riverfront dining creates the opportunity for a signature river experience, and is an attractor to the region.

DINING QUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Much of the dining along the length of the Murray is similar in nature: large bistros based in clubs. Although these clubs and facilities are a major tourism asset to the region, it was noted in workshops that this lack of variety does not meet the preferences of many sections of the tourism market, due to the perceived quality and lack of variety on offer. Diversification into a range of cuisines, scales of operations and quality of offer may improve the perception of the Murray in some market segments, particularly those from the capital cities.

PROVIDORES

The product audit of the Murray Region has not identified one provedore, specialising in the sale of local produce, although some VICs do sell pre-packaged produce such as conserves and local wines.

If providores specialising and marketing the high quality local produce along the river prove successful, it may encourage increased participation in tourism by the local agricultural industry.

LOCAL PRODUCE VANS

The concept is to have vans selling regional produce to tour the camping grounds, particularly during peak seasons. Anecdotally, campers may be more time poor than financially poor, indicating a business opportunity by providing quality local produce at their camp site.

The success of this operation may be linked to being supplied by a local provedore.

FARM GATE SALES AND CELLAR DOORS

There is an opportunity to extend visitor stays and enhance visitor experience through opening up farms and vineyards for visitor experiences. These experiences may vary from road side purchases through to opportunities to meet the producer and see the farm in operation.

FOOD AND WINE TOURING ROUTES

Depending on the availability of farm gate sales and cellar doors, touring routes could be established to highlight the food and wine related experiences on offer in the region.

2.2.5. FESTIVALS, EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

HORSE RACING

Race meetings are held across the Murray Region, including Albury, Balranald, Berrigan, Corowa, Deniliquin, Echuca, Gunbower, Holbrook, Kerang, Manangatang, Mildura, Moulamein, Swan Hill, Tocumwal, Wentworth and Wodonga. Country race meetings are an opportunity to attract younger visitors into the region: in particular the Victorian *Look At Me* segment and the NSW *Groupies* market segments.

2.2.6. ACCOMMODATION

UPGRADE 3 AND 3 ½ STAR MOTELS

There is a very large number of 3 to 3 ½ star motels in the Murray Region that need reinvestment to upgrade them to meet modern consumer demands. This should include consideration of a change in accommodation stock to meet demand for other types where possible.

RIVERFRONT ACCOMMODATION

Outside of caravan parks, there is very little accommodation in the Murray Region with views of the river. Opportunities to establish a range of accommodation options making the most of the River are included in many of the riverfront masterplan exercises referred to in section 4, The River.

NEXT STEPS

The Murray Regional Tourism Board can provide marketing and promotional support for the trail which is already well developed; this would involve developing a marketing plan for trail including new promotional material and a brand.

4.4.4. RIVER ACCESS

PROJECT PROFILE

River Access was identified as a strategic initiative for the Murray; it is the provision of improved and additional points for visitors, and locals, to experience the river. This includes boat ramps, roads, parking and associated amenities that support people making use of the Murray for recreation and social activities.

Although this has also been identified as a strategic initiative, it is recommended that this becomes a major and coordinated project for the entire Murray Region. This will enable a strategic approach to improved access, ensuring that opportunities for improving access to drive increased visitation are taken up. Also, by putting all river access projects under one umbrella the project provides a public relations opportunity, highlighting that the river is ready for adventure and water based activities. The consolidation of Council funding for these projects will also increase the likelihood of garnering funding from government sources, such as Regional Development Australia, for the project, and also makes the enhancement of river access a key inclusion in the Ports of the Murray project.

NEXT STEPS

A River Access infrastructure plan should be prepared which reviews and provides an implementation strategy across the Murray Region.

4.4.5. RIVERFRONT COMMERCIAL PRECINCT, ALBURY

PROJECT PROFILE

The Murray River Experience Master Plan for Albury includes the development of a commercial precinct within the central Albury riverside parks. This precinct may incorporate restaurants, casual food/dining outlets, equipment hire (bike/canoe) and function rooms overlooking the river. It will also provide a boardwalk promenade linking the precinct to surrounding recreational infrastructure and a port for the paddle steamer PS Cumberoona which will be on permanent display. The project will support the establishment of a "port" in Albury.

The proposed riverfront commercial precinct will service the large Albury resident population and strengthen tourism potential within the town.

NEXT STEPS

The next steps of the project are to establish business case for the project. The project is likely to be led by Albury City; however the Murray Regional Tourism Board can share its knowledge of visitor markets, tourism drivers and promotional and lobbying activity.

6. GOLF INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

Objective: Strengthen and Increase the Prominence of golf tourism in the Murray through facility renewal and attraction of new investment in golf infrastructure.

6.1. THE PROJECTS

Tier	Project	Region
1	Cohuna Eco Village and Golf Resort	Mid Western Murray
2	Murray Golf Packages	Murray Region
	Cobram-Barooga Sporties Club Development	Mid Eastern Murray
	Tocumwal Golf Club Development	Mid Eastern Murray
3	Lake Side Golf Development, Yarrawonga	Central Murray

6.2. THE OPPORTUNITY

The Murray Region includes some of the first large scale Golf Resorts to be developed in Australia. In total there are 67 courses in the region, with 16 offering on-site accommodation. When these Golf Resorts were being developed in the 1980s and early 1990s there was limited competition, but over the past decade regions such as the Mornington and Bellarine Peninsulas have been areas of substantial golf course development. The introduction of cheap air fares has also increased the competition from places further afield, like the Gold Coast. This increased competition may explain the decline in golf visitors over the past decade.

The overriding view from within the Murray Region is not that the courses are not of a high enough standard, but many of the clubs' accommodation and facilities are dated and need investment.

In order to compete with other golfing destinations, investment is required to meet the needs of the current golfing market. This investment includes new facilities to spark interest from the golfing fraternity, as well as refurbishing the existing clubs. For this reason, the *Accommodation and Clubhouse Upgrades* is an important initiative, and one that should be extended to the other large clubs in the region.

The reinvestment into the accommodation and clubhouse facilities will also contribute to Opportunity 7: Food and Wine; and Opportunity 10: Accommodation. Golf Resorts represent a significant proportion of the current dining and accommodation capacity in the Murray Region.

7. FOOD AND WINE

Objective: Improve the Murray's food and wine tourism Offer by encouraging primary producers to develop tourism infrastructure, promoting the use of local produce and the development of diverse and unique dining experiences.

7.1. PROJECTS

Tier	Project	Region
1	Corowa Chocolate Factory and Whisky Distillery	Mid Eastern Murray
2	Dairy Industry Tourist Centre	Mid Eastern Murray
	Koondrook Goods Store	Mid Western Murray

7.2. THE OPPORTUNITY

Some of Australia's most productive agricultural land is located within the Murray Region, including broad acre farming, dairying, and significant areas of irrigated fruit production. Some of the largest vineyards are also located in the Western and Mid-Western Murray, along with many other wineries throughout most of the Murray Region.

Although there is no doubt that the region's food and wine production is agriculturally significant, there is limited opportunity for visitors to the Murray to experience it. Outside of the successful food based touring route in the Cobram area, there is limited farm gate operations or opportunities for visitors to have an agricultural experience. Wine is in a similar situation: many recognised wine labels run vineyards throughout the region but not cellar doors.

There is a similar situation with destination dining. Although not the only measure of a quality dining experience, the Age Good Food Guide awarded hats to two restaurants in the entire region. One of these restaurants has views to the river and only one other opportunity for dining by the river has been identified during the project. The only type of dining that Business Survey respondents found lacking in the region was high quality dining and restaurants⁹. There are opportunities to create dining experiences in the country pubs throughout the Murray Region.

It is a noticeable and frequently referred to gap in the tourism product offer that there is limited opportunities for riverfront dining across the entire region. Many of the Councils in the Murray Region are looking to address this by including restaurants and cafes in riverfront redevelopment and masterplan projects.

In Tourism Victoria's Regional Awareness and Perception Study (RAPS) the Murray Region received the highest rates of unprompted awareness for Food and Wine. Also, Tourism Victoria's campaign for the Murray has been focussed on the food and wine attributes of the region, yet the opportunities for visitor experience are limited.

⁹ 40% of respondents indicated an adequate supply. Hotels, clubs and bistros, Cafes and bakeries, Takeaway and convenience all received around 80% adequate supply responses.

money, further diversifying the market and subsequently increasing both real and potential revenue generation¹³.

This view of the benefits of events is supported by the anecdotal response to the recent Melbourne Food and Wine Festival event held in Koondrook, which introduced new visitors and generated interest in further development of food and wine related products in the town. Also, Festivals and Events was the product most frequently identified by respondents to the Business Survey as the development most likely to provide the greatest increase in visitors.

9.2.2. CONFERENCES

Conferences are an important sector within event related visitation. The value of business events to the Australian economy is estimated to be worth \$7.9 billion and is one of the highest yielding sectors within the tourism industry. Although much of this benefit flows through the major capital cities, regional conferences still contribute significantly to local economies.

Business Events Victoria indicate that the bulk of conference planners enquiring about holding an event in regional Victoria are looking for venues within a one to one and a half hours drive from Melbourne, Echuca is the closest point on the river to Melbourne, and is about a 2hr 45 min drive, outside the anecdotal boundary for the business events market. However the Murray has a competitive advantage in being located on the border of Victoria and NSW, and in the case of Mildura, close to South Australia as well. Albury's regularly scheduled flights from Melbourne and Sydney, and Mildura's from Melbourne and the recently announced flights from Sydney and Adelaide provide them with a competitive advantage over other regional business events destinations.

Conference venues that have accommodation are at a distinct market advantage. The accommodation standard within these conference venues across the state is generally hotel style rooms within the 3 ½ to 4 star range, with 4 stars being the average. The range of other tourism product on offer in the conference location is also an important factor, with wineries, golf courses, farm gates and health spas seen as important supporting factors in determining conference locations.

The proposals for new conference and events centres range from a 1,000 person venue in Mildura to a 200 seat venue that can also hold community events and functions in Swan Hill.

¹³ Estimating the Economic Impacts of Festivals and Events: A Research Guide. B. Janeczko, T.Mules and B.Ritchie, 2002.

Tourism Victoria's Regional Tourism Action Plan supports the development of conference venues attached to high quality accommodation at Wodonga, Yarrawonga and Mildura.

9.3. STRATEGIC PROJECTS

The development of a coordinated events strategy for the Murray Region is an important initiative. The intention is to have a range of events that have significant presence in the major visitor markets for the Murray Region, and ensure that they are scheduled to enable each one to reach its maximum audience.

Aligned to this, is the range of horse racing events held in the region, which appeal to younger market segments than the average Murray visitor.

9.4. CONFERENCE CENTRE PRIORITIES

The priorities for conference centre development are Mildura and Echuca, the basis for this is:

- Accessibility is important;
 - Mildura has air services to three capitals, Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide.
 - Echuca is 2 ½ hour's drive from Melbourne, and is closer than other river destinations.
- Both Echuca and Mildura have accommodation capacity to support large conferences;
- They also have a range of other products to support large events, such as wineries, golf courses and restaurants.

9.5. TIER ONE PROJECT PROFILES

9.5.1. NORTH WEST MOTOR SPORT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

PROJECT PROFILE

This project proposes the development of the motor sport complexes at Mildura and Swan Hill. Concept master plans have been developed for both Chisholm Reserve at Swan Hill and a consolidated facility at Koorlong, on the outskirts of Mildura. The coordination of the development of the two facilities ensures that they offer a complimentary range of facilities to promote the region as a motor sports hub.

10. ACCOMMODATION

Objective: To diversify the accommodation base in the Murray Region to appeal to a range of Target visitor Segments.

10.1. THE PROJECTS

Tier	Project	Region
1	Echuca 5 Star Resort and Conference Centre	Central Murray
2	Lake Boga Waterfront Resort	Mid Western Murray
	Swan Hill Serviced Apartments	Mid Western Murray
3	5 Star Accommodation	Eastern Murray
	Backpackers in Central Albury	Eastern Murray
	Wonga Wetlands Eco-Lodge	Eastern Murray
	Backpackers in Yarrawonga	Mid Eastern Murray
	Quality Accommodation, Corowa	Mid Eastern Murray
	Echuca Backpackers	Central Murray
	Echuca Overflow Camping	Central Murray
	Eco Lodges	Central Murray
	Swan Hill Backpackers	Mid Western Murray
	Wentworth Showgrounds Camping Infrastructure	Western Murray

10.2. THE OPPORTUNITY

Although Accommodation is rarely the product that attracts people into a region, it is an important consideration for visitors in determining their trip destinations. Market research indicates that different segments have different preferences for accommodation, such as the NSW Compatriots/Family Travellers preference for self-contained accommodation. Other segments, such as the Roy Morgan Socially Aware prefer eco-tourism opportunities and are attracted to eco-lodge developments within the region's National Parks.

This Opportunity reflects the findings that the accommodation supply needs to diversify and provide more high quality establishments: capacity appears to be adequate or more than adequate across the region. Comparison of the capacity and number of motels along the Murray with the Great Ocean Road is telling: there is double the number of 15 or more room establishments on the Murray, yet they receive similar number of visitor nights¹⁴. The product audit also indicates that excluding caravan parks, over 47% of the region's accommodation capacity is in Motels: 70% of this room night capacity is also in 3 and 3 ½ star establishments. This is also supported by the results of the business survey: 22% of respondents indicated there was an oversupply, the next highest was 7% for caravan parks and camping.

The specific findings include:

- The need to upgrade many of the 3 and 3 ½ motels in the region;
- The need for more diversity in the accommodation supply, including backpackers, 5 star hotels, serviced apartments and eco-lodges; and,
- The lack of accommodation that provides river frontages, outside of caravan parks.

¹⁴ Based on ABS, Tourist Accommodation, Small Area Data, Sept. 2011, Dec 02, TRA: NVS Visitor Nights, Hotels only.

Parks Victoria and the NSW Parks and Wildlife Service have both identified opportunities to grow visitation to the river red gum parks in the Central Murray. This overarching project includes upgrades to visitor facilities and water access and development of a range of new visitor experiences. Several other proposals listed separately in this report are also part of this overarching project, such as the River Red Gum High Ropes Experience, eco lodges and Destination Development opportunities for visitor infrastructure, bird watching facilities and tracks and trails.

RIVER RED GUM HIGH ROPES EXPERIENCE

Tree top experiences have been successful tourism developments across Australia, and the River Red Gum parks along the Murray provide an opportunity to provide a similar attraction in the Central Murray. One concept for the experience is a cross-river fly over, although there are some issues to contend with in implementing this idea. NSW Parks and Wildlife Service have identified this as an opportunity to partner with private enterprise.

BARMAH NATIONAL PARK

Combined with Millewa National Park on the north of the River, Barmah represents the largest remaining river red gum forest in the world. Key sites for development in the park include the Barmah Lakes camping and day visit area, and the Gulf Campground. Parks Victoria has identified the need to improve camping and day visitor infrastructure, as well as improving the access roads within the Park. These projects have been funded.

DHARNYA CENTRE

The Dharnya Centre, located within Barmah National Park, is an initiative between the Yorta Yorta National Aboriginal Corporation and Parks Victoria. The Centre is currently closed while structural assessments and rectification works are undertaken. The intention is for the centre to provide technical and tertiary education programs, as well as continuing its role in providing talks and information sessions to schools and groups.

GUNBOWER NATIONAL PARK

Prior to becoming a National Park in 2010, Gunbower Island was a State Forest. Parks Victoria are proposing to introduce more formal camp sites and improved day visitor infrastructure to both promote increase visitation and improve park management. These projects have been funded.

MATHOURA ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

Mathoura and the surrounding Millewa National Park present an opportunity to develop a research and education facility based on the extensive natural attributes of the region. Although this proposal is not focused specifically on tourism, it may have an impact on visitation through highlighting the natural attributes of the region as well as attracting education tours.

PARK BASED ADVENTURE EVENTS

Hosting events such as mountain bike races and other suitable events within the Central Murray's Parks and Reserves presents an opportunity to attract a new range of visitors and increase awareness of what they have to offer.

CROSS BORDER RIVER RED GUM NATURE TRAIL

Parks Victoria and the NSW Parks and Wildlife Service are collaborating on a range of initiatives to promote the National Parks along the river. These initiatives include a cross border River Red Gum Nature Trail. The trail would be for canoeing, and would require the development of signage, maps and landing points at key locations. It is proposed that Barmah Lakes be the starting point for the trail.

KYABRAM FAUNA PARK

Further development of the Kyabram Fauna Park may increase its recognition with the tourism market. It has one of two salt water crocodile displays in Victoria, and currently attracts over 45,000 visitors per year.

MID WESTERN MURRAY

LAKE MUNGO VISITOR CENTRE

The NSW Department of Commerce is currently developing a business case for a new Mungo Centre, which will act as the gateway to the Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage Area, and the focus for interpretation of the significant heritage of Lake Mungo. Consideration is being given to visitor facilities, interpretation, connection and opportunities for the aboriginal communities and the housing of Mungo artefacts.



Buronga Primary School Captains

- Award winning Australia's Inland Botanic Garden – first semi arid botanic garden in Southern Hemisphere.
- Trentham Winery.
- Award winning Gol Gol Hotel.
- Buronga International Food Festival.
- Sunraysia Garden Centre and Nursery.
- House boat operations.
- Highly valued caravan park facilities.
- Buronga Wetlands.
- Truck stops.
- Local farm produce outlets.

6.3 Community Challenges

- Lack of community and shopping facilities, including a supermarket, pharmacy and high school.
- Lack of physical community heart.
- Lack of local development group.
- No mail delivery, resulting in many residents having a post box in Mildura.
- Limited child care options.
- Some local groups are really struggling with volunteer involvement.
- Planning for an ageing population.
- Heavy traffic and planning for a truck bypass.

*'People are at the stage
where they want to see
something happen'.
(Gol Gol Resident)*

6.4 Directions Forward and Recommended Actions

Recommended Action 1: Creation of a Buronga/Gol Gol Development Group

There is strong local interest in the formation of a local development vehicle to provide a focus for community and economic action. Description of such a possible group (objectives, structure etc) is outlined in Appendix (ii). It is strongly recommended that such a Group be linked with the proposed Wentworth Regional Tourism and Development Association.

Key Steps:

1. Formation of BGGDG Steering Group to develop and instigate a model of operation appropriate to local needs.
2. Initiate discussions with WSC and WRD regarding inclusion within the proposed Wentworth Regional Tourism and Development Association structure and servicing.
3. Promotion of group within the community and recruitment of members.
4. Formation of a set of Task Teams to focus on immediate community priorities.

Responsibility: BGGDG

Possible Partners: WDC, local primary schools

Possible Resources: State and national road funding sources, RDAF

Success Indicators: Improved liveability and safety for local residents and schools; enhanced community engagement.

Recommended Action 4: Village Centre Development

Lack of a central community and commercial hub with essential services like a supermarket, pharmacy, police station and a full post office not only mitigates against a sense of community heart, but is a major factor in locals spending time and their finances in the City of Mildura. With a growing population, it is essential that planning and action happens to create such a space and heart in the community.

Key Steps:

1. Formation of Task team as a sub group of the BGGDG.
2. Community 'conversations' and *consensus around community aspirations and ideas relating to service inclusion, site, ascetics etc*
3. Development of a business plan that incorporates possible and viable community, civic and commercial services that are needed in such a development. In particular, the use of the Midway Precinct as a service centre site needs exploring.
4. Negotiations begin with WSC and developers.

Community Strategic Plan Objective Linkage: Increased economic development and growth. Improve our built urban environment. Improve community infrastructure.

Timeline: Immediate to the long term

Responsibility: BGGDG, WSC

Possible Partners: Private developers, RDA, DSRD

Possible Resources: private, WSC, RDAF, CBPP, RDAF

Success Indicators: community involvement and consensus; creation of local community; civic and commercial services; creation of an attractive and vibrant community heart; and plugging of leaks in local economy.

Recommended Action 5: Aged Care Development

Lack of local aged care options is perceived as a major community priority. This initiative would involve identification and development of approximate aged care facilities.

Key Steps:

1. Formation of a task Team of interested residents by BGGDG.
2. Survey of local residents to ascertain level of interest.
3. *Identification of commitment and viable options.*
4. Conversation and collaboration with Murray House about creating an extension of service into Buronga/Gol Gol.
5. Development of proposal, fundraising and implementation.



Wentworth Local Environmental Plan 2011

Flood Planning Area Map River Front Building Line Map - Sheet CL1_004G

Flood Planning

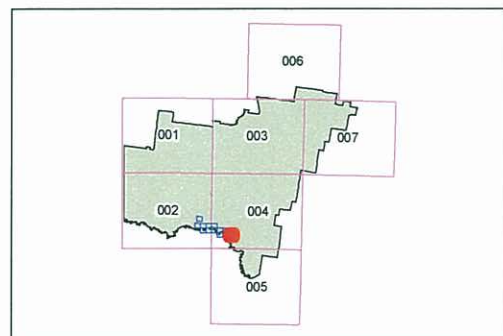
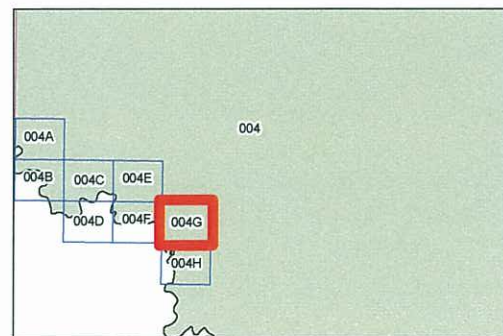
Flood Planning Area

River Front Building Line

River Front Building Line (Indicative)

Cadastre

Base data 08/12/2010 © Land and Property Information (LPI)



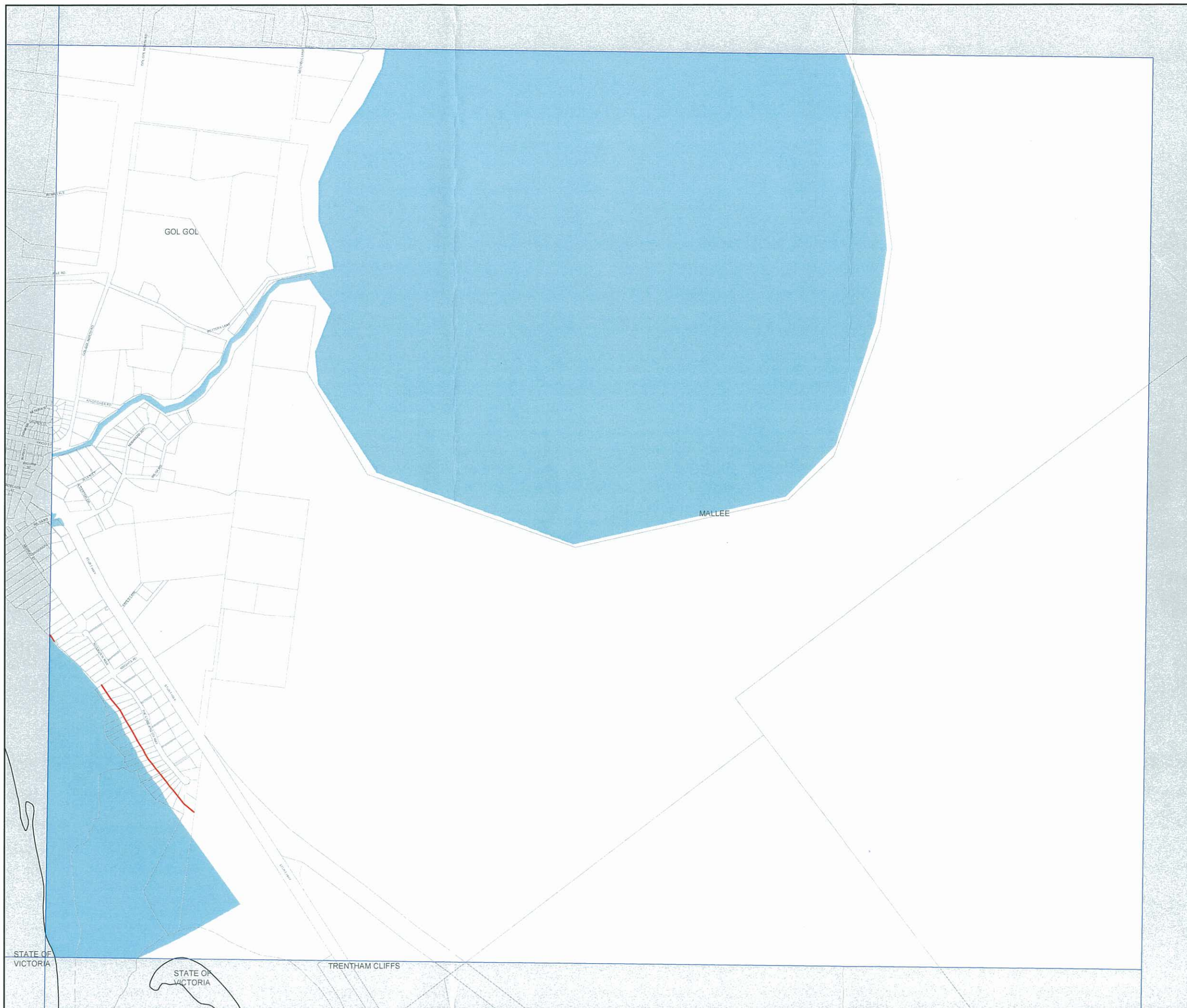
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Scale: 1:20,000 @ A3

Projection: GDA 1994
MGA Zone 54

Map identification number:

8200_COM_CL1_004G_020_20111201





Wentworth Local Environmental Plan 2011

Flood Planning Area Map River Front Building Line Map - Sheet CL1_004H

Flood Planning

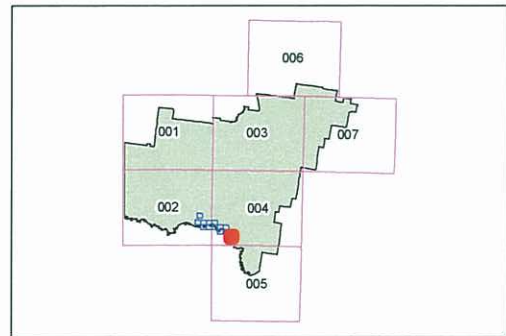
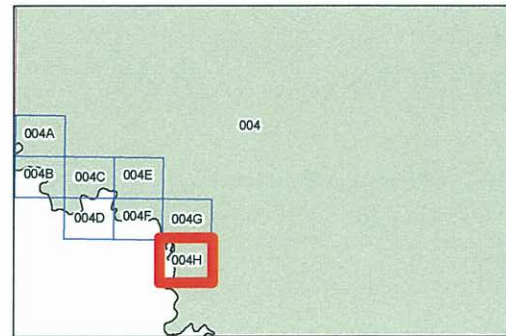
Flood Planning Area

River Front Building Line

River Front Building Line (Indicative)

Cadastral

Base data 08/12/2010 © Land and Property Information (LPI)



0 200 400 600 800 Metres

Scale: 1:20,000 @ A3

Projection: GDA 1994
MGA Zone 54

Map identification number:

8200_COM_CL1_004H_020_20111201



29 October 2009

Mr Des Lush
Woorlong
PO Box 386
Gol Gol NSW 2738

Dear Mr Lush

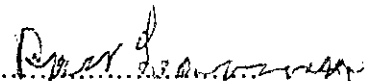
ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE SEARCH – FRONT PORTION WOORLONG STATION

I confirm a surface inspection of the land bordered in yellow on the attached map took place on 28 October 2009.

No significant sites of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage were sited in this yellow bordered area on the attached map. The area is predominantly comprised of Mallee Vegetation which rarely has significant sites. A significant portion of the bordered area has been interfered with by gravel extraction and motorbike tracks.

I am an Elder of the Barkinji People and have undertaken other inspections of this nature for other properties.

Yours sincerely


RAY LUSH

Address

32 FAIRVIEW ST
GOL GOL NSW 2738



Our Ref (A34956)

16 December 2008

Mr Bob Wheeldon
C/- Grand Junction Pty Ltd
PO Box 660
Sydney NSW 2001 Gol Gol NSW 2738

Dear Bob,

RE: Your application to modify 00L0027 (BU0017) consent as granted under the *Native Vegetation Conservation Act 1997 (NVC Act 1997)*

This letter is to formally advise you that your application to modify development consent BU0017 under the *Native Vegetation Conservation Act 1997* has been approved by the Board of the Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority.

The consented area is now as shown in the attached map. The map annexed to the original consent has now been replaced with this new map.

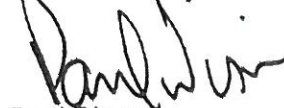
The expiry date remains the 23/6/2025 as per the original consents. The conditions prescribed in Attachment 1 of the original consent also remain in effect

Please note that the DoL (Department of Lands) Western Lands Commission in Dubbo have been notified that the clearing consent modification has been approved and a copy of the amended map forwarded to them.

You as the applicant, have the responsibility of contacting DNR Western Lands Commission administration to modify any cultivation permits granted under the *Western Lands Act 1901*, to align these permits with the revised clearing consent area.

For your information, should you be dissatisfied with the outcome of these variations, you have the right of appeal to the Land and Environment Court.

Yours sincerely



Paul Dixon
General Manager

PD/NH/c





Lower Murray Darling

CMA CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Form B

Modification/alteration of Clearing Consent

Granted under the *Native Vegetation Conservation Act 1997*,
according to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

Development

Application registered number:

00L0027 (BU0014) – Woorlong Property

Development Application

Applicant name Mr Desmond George and Joyce Olive Lush, and Grand Junction Pty Ltd

Western Lands Lease and Lot and Deposited Plan Western Lands Lease: was 9473 (now 14564)
Lot//DP: 2//1099648

Postal address C/- Grand Junction Pty Ltd
PO Box 660
Sydney NSW 2001

Land and area under application Clearing consent BU0014 was granted in June 2000 to develop 2,428 hectares of native vegetation for dryland cropping.

Proposed Modification Approx. 1,828 hectares has been cleared and cropped with a further 358 hectares harvested for charcoal. 242 hectares remains uncleared. The applicant has proposed to modify this development consent as described in the attached report – "Modification of Clearing Consent, Woorlong", as described in section 2.1 of the report, and summarised below.
242 ha to be relinquished from existing consent areas on Woorlong as per Map 2.
332 ha to be cleared (Section E refer to Appendix 1a of report) as per Map 3.

Variation to consent

Made on (date)

10 December 2008

The recommending Officer is of the opinion that :

the development as modified will be substantially the same as the development approved by the original consent.

Attachments

Attachment A Application from Mr DG and Mrs JO Lush and Grand Junction Pty Ltd for modification of clearing consent 00L0027 (BU0014), and owner's consent to lodge application from Department of Lands.

Attachment B Original Clearing Consent 00L0027 (BU0014).

Attachment C Maps –
Map 1, original consent as issued,
Map 2, areas to be forfeited as part of this modification, and
Map 3, amended consent as varied.

Recommended by

Gary Doyle, Board Member and Chair of LMD CMA PVP Committee

Signed

Date

10 December 2008

Mark King, Chair, Approved on behalf of the full LMD CMA Board

Approved By

Signed

Date

10 December 2008

Attachment A – Reasons for approving this Modification/alteration of consent

To be completed by the recommending Officer/Board Member.

Banya Station (BU0007) and Woorlong Station (BU0017)

Following review of the applicant's documentation as well as Portfolio Board members attending site visits, the LMD CMA Board members have reviewed the CMA officer's recommendations regarding Development Applications for Banya Station (BU0007) and Woorlong Station (BU0017).

LMD CMA Board **APPROVE** the applications based on the reasons stated below:-

1. Whilst the officer's assessment and recommendations are on an individual property applications basis, the CMA Board consider that the assessment are more appropriately based on a review of both applications as a single proposal.
2. Had the Board considered both proposals individually, then the opportunity to improve biodiversity at a landscape scale would have been lost.
3. CMA Board recognised that for a number of years, both Banya and Woorlong Stations were owned, managed and operated as a single entity. It was therefore felt that a single proposal approach was appropriate from a Natural Resource Management perspective, that is, from a holistic view to achieve an overall NRM maintain and improve outcome.
4. The CMA Board assessment took into consideration resilience of the landscape, to achieve the best NRM outcome.
5. The area of assessment to be modified (380Ha), which represents only 7.3% of the original clearing consents. Over 90% of the original clearing consents remain unchanged and are not included in the request for modification.
6. Modification would decrease clearing by 48Ha (plus the extra buffer zone).
7. Retention of Mallee/ semi-arid woodland in Banya, next to the Mallee Cliffs National Park, will increase high quality habitat for Threatened Species. The original clearing consent could have otherwise provided clearing consent, which was not considered a more favourable NRM outcome. The majority of Threatened Species identified require this type of vegetation community.

8. Additional buffer areas (37Ha) have been proposed from the original application, of which 29Ha is high quality Chenopod Mallee.
9. Land management works proposed by the landholder is a NRM benefit to the catchment and the community.
10. The proposal will provide an increase in the density of trees, due to the retention of the Banya woodlands. That is, an overall net reduction in the number of trees that may have been cleared under the existing consent.
11. Removing potential clearing adjacent to Mallee Cliffs National Park improves the NRM benefits to the park as well.

Other factors considered :-

- Uncontrolled access by the general public
- Area used as a rubbish tip
- Potential for encroachment from urban development areas
- Site inspection of locations
- Retention of high priority vegetation communities (e.g. 170Ha Belah rosewood retained, not developed)

end

APPROVED BY LMD CMA BOARD ON 10/12/2008

CHANGE OF LEASE PURPOSE - WLL 14564 -

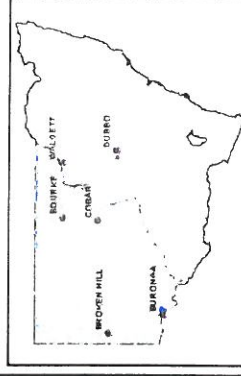
Property: WOORLONG
Lessees: D.G. & J.O LUSH and
GRAND JUNCTION PTY LTD

Copyright NSW Land and Property Management Authority (2009)
This map is not guaranteed to be free from error or omission. The
Land and Property Management Authority and its employees disclaim liability
for any act or omission, or for any consequences of such act or omission.

Legend

 COLP Area

 WLL14564- Subdivision



SCALE - 1:15,000



Projection: GDA84 MGA Zone 54
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Land and Property
Management Authority

Lush
staking and cultivation

Lush
cultivation