

MSEAT Regional Leadership Meeting Notes

4pm Thursday 1 July 2021

Agenda

- Destination New South Wales's role is to promote NSW Tourism offerings to drive visitation. DNSW are planning to visit the region soon and RDA Murray will have the opportunity to discuss our regional priorities with them. What would you like DNSW to know to assist them in the promotion of our region?

RDA Murray Update

Edwina Hayes – RDA Murray:

- Steve Cox is the new CEO of Destination New South Wales. He and his team are discussing touring the Murray region in approx. 2 weeks (pending restrictions).
- DNSW is responsible for the promotion, marketing, and event support to drive visitation to the area. Murray Regional Tourism provides skill development and support for business to develop tourism in the region.
- We have an opportunity to welcome Steve Cox for the first time to our region and drive where DNSW should dedicate their resources. This will include a hero's welcome at Albury airport, a board meeting style presentation of opportunities and a tour of the region.

Member Updates

Norm Brennan – Edward River Council

- DNSW should visit:
 - The Depot – Automotive Museum <https://www.depotdeni.com.au/>
 - Ute muster museum <https://www.deniutemuster.com.au/muster-museum/>

Chris Stern – Justin Clancy MP

- Dine and Discover has been extended to 31 August 2021.
- Announced 1 July that NSW Small Business and Hospitality COVID-19 grants have been extended to border communities and backdated to May 2021.

Gerard Van Emmerik – Federation Council

- Lockdowns are making people nervous about travel, and this is having an impact on the region.
- Evidence that some NSW clubs in the region have had to employ security staff to turn away those from VIC during their recent lockdown.
- There is a shortage of staff available for tourism industries. Operating at reduced capacity because of this.

- “North of the Murray” regional tourism brand, launched by the newly merged council, has had strong interest. So far, they have seen 200,000 hits on the website and social media. The first months of this campaign is focused on an awareness campaign for the brand. They face a challenge in that it is difficult to gauge how this awareness will turn into visitor numbers once COVID-19 restrictions begin to lift. However, the region has been busy when visitors have been allowed.
- DNSW visit – communities where larger clubs are impacted by lockdowns are finding it hard going. There should be discussion with DNSW about the impacts for regional clubs more broadly.

Ray Davy – Balranald Shire Council

- DNSW Visit - Mungo is the primary destination for tourists in the Balrandald region and the area continues to be busy. The challenge for Mungo tourism is around the logistics of weather and unsealed roads, couple with high visitation numbers. The council is working on a few initiatives to tackle this. Yanga NP and other sites are secondary visitation locus.

Heather Wilton – Greater Hume Shire Council

- Congratulated Federation Council on their excellent promotion of the North of The Murray tourism promotion.
- DNSW visit – would like to ask if there is any promotion being given to the horse racing industry, especially regional picnic races. It is well worth promoting those events for those who want to have a fun day out.

Steve Donaghey – Master Builders Association.

- Currently briefing several government representatives on the Automatic Mutual Recognition Act. In its current form, it does not work across the states for some industries. Specifically for the building industry, the act applies to ‘persons”, yet builders generally operate as a “company”, so the act is not applying to them.
- Supply chain delays, timber, and labour shortages (e.g., bricklayers) are causing issues. Price increases and these delays are affecting those who have fixed price contracts but are unable to do the work before price rises.

Heather Wilton – Greater Hume Shire Council

- Noted that there is a massive shortage of timber in Australia, and this has been exacerbated by the fires. There is a massive lead time due to growth factors. Replanting’s will take 10 years to mature. There is a high demand for Australian grown timber, again increasing delays.

Geoff Lowe – RDA Murray Board and Ikon Suspension

- DNSW visit – Holbrook, rail trail in Tumbarumba, showcasing Albury and a significant airline hub.
- Has had a discussion with Karen Payne, Federal Tax Ombudsman. She feels her services are not well known enough. Suggested that MSEAT may promote services to help businesses in the region.

- There is \$45 billion dollars' worth of tax debt owed to the ATO across Australia and approximately 60% of that is small to medium business. How much of this is tourism businesses who are struggling?

Karen Payne contact details:

Inspector- General and Taxation Ombudsman

Ph: 02 8239 2125

Email: karen.payne@igt.gov.au

Terry Dodds – Murray River Council

- There is a lack of synchronisation with the border bubble zones between the NSW and VIC governments. Many situations where messages are not consistent and sometimes incorrect. Poor descriptors are confusing people on both sides of the river. We must standardise the bubble across both states.
- An example of one of the issues is Rochester, VIC. Most residents work across the border in NSW. The border bubble cuts Rochester in half, so those who live in the south side of Rochester require permits to attend work in NSW.

John Elgin - BEC

- The Murray region has a unique tourism appeal to the VIC market in outdoor pursuits – skiing, camping, fishing etc – not just as a food and wine destination. We need a campaign focussed on identifying this unique asset to our visitors.

Kerry-Anne Jones – South West Arts

- DNSW visit – touring routes, bike and river trails and clubs in the region. The region should not just be promoted as a summer destination. Winter activities are very much a part of the region.
- South West Arts are working on a cultural assets mapping project of the 6 LGAs in the central southern NSW region. This will identify linkages between existing significant assets and the promotion of the region. Working on getting people to stay in the region to tour rather than day trips.

Glenn Stewart - Robinvale

- DNSW – Euston Weir. It is unique for skiing as it is wider, bigger, and safer than most skiing spots in the region. Fishing and camping are also great in the region. There are at least 760 significant Aboriginal heritage sites that have not yet been mapped.
- The caravan parks in Euston and Robinvale are both full now.
- Euston Club still have approx. 25 vacancies that they are struggling to fill.

Jim Dannock - AIG

- Hearing of issues in construction sector of builders' experiencing cashflow problems due to delays in supply chain and labour shortages.
- Has heard no feedback about the border bubble so feels that it is working at present.

Michael Pisasale – Murray Irrigation Limited

- DNSW – showcase the channel system. MIL is currently working on several environmental water projects – opportunity for tourism interest in this. Deni rice mill could also be of interest.

Ambrose Glass – Albury City Council

- First BNE – ABX was due to come into Albury Airport 1 July but has been delayed due to lockdowns.
- Melbourne is a key audience for tourism promotion.
- Events play a big part in tourism for Albury.
- DNSW sites – Albury Entertainment Centre, Lavington Sportsground, galleries, and heritage trails.
- Albury has been seeing great signs of tourism recovery in the past 3 weeks.

Josh Bergamin – Helen Dalton MP

- Uncertainty of lockdowns has driven people to cancel plans in the region.
- DNSW should be promoting tourism within NSW. Cannot rely on the VIC audience for tourism.

Mark Francis – Murray River Tourism

- MRT have drafted letters to both VIC and NSW Premiers to try to get a synergy between states for the border bubble.
- DNSW visit – How do we elevate the success rate of the Murray region over the other regions? Our region has been significantly more impacted than other regions.
- Data for year-end up to March 2021 shows that visitation is 50% verse pre-COVID-19 levels and estimated \$1 billion loss to the region's economy.
- There is a significant tourism campaign coming for the whole of the Murray region that is focussed cross border. VIC government have provided funding, but funding from NSW is required to continue.

ACTIONABLE COLLECTIVE PRIORITIES

- RDA Murray will follow up DNSW Tour details and include appropriate leaders Noting adventure and arts trails, country horse racing and our hero attractions.
- The meeting closed as members became aware of VIC Border restriction changes. All to follow up with an early meeting in 2 weeks. (as at 8/7/2021 regular meeting timeframe applied as responding to evolving COVID Restrictions impacts along the Murray do not require urgent meeting as actions are already in place)

Next Meeting Thursday 29 July 4pm via zoom.

Please contact Edwina 0427267753 edwina.hayes@rdamurray.org.au for further clarification or information