

Subject: Northbank as Destination NSW Priority Project

Date: Friday, 3 August 2018 at 3:55:04 pm Australian Eastern Standard Time

From: Bob Wheeldon

To: Gary White

Gary

I attach two emails from:

- **Gabby Brown**

Regional Tourism Development Manager, Riverina Murray
Destination NSW ; and

- **Richie Robinson**

General Manager | Destination Riverina Murray
0418 439 202 richie.robinson@destinationrm.com.au



**Destination
Riverina Murray NSW**

These emails confirm that the "Wentworth Eco Resort Development" is indeed referring to the Northbank in the Destination Management Plan.

We believe this is a very strong factor to weigh in considering the consistency of the Northbank Planning Proposal with Far West Regional Plan and NSW Planning Policies.

See you next Tuesday.

Best
Bob

Hi Bob

Thanks for the call earlier this afternoon, great to hear more about your project. To assist with the planning proposal and your discussions with the NSW Dept. of Planning I can confirm the reference within the Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan to the "Wentworth Eco Resort Development" is indeed referring to the Northbank on the Murray development. Northbank is considered a priority project for the region and Destination Riverina Murray are strongly supportive. I am happy to provide a more formal letter of support if/when required.

Thanks, Richie

Richie Robinson

General Manager | Destination Riverina Murray
0418 439 202 richie.robinson@destinationrm.com.au



**Destination
Riverina Murray NSW**

Sign up to our newsletter [here](#).

From: Gabby Brown <gabby.brown@dnsw.com.au>

Date: Thursday, 2 August 2018 at 12:00 pm

To: Richie Robinson <richie.robinson@destinationrm.com.au>, Mark Francis <ceo@mrtb.com.au>
Cc: Bob Wheeldon <bob@wheeldon.com.au>
Subject: Northbank Development

Hi Richie, Mark,

This morning I met with Bob Wheeldon (cc'd) to discuss his plans to develop a large scale crystal lagoon and resort in Buronga NSW - see attached documents.

Bob has submitted a rezoning proposal to NSW Department of Planning, which is currently at the first stage of assessment.

Bob is seeking support for the development by way of written confirmation that the 'Wentworth Eco Resort Development' - mentioned in both Plans as a 'Priority Project' - is in fact referring to his Northbank project; he feels this will assist his case with Dept. of Planning by demonstrating the project is strategically sound, aligned to both Destination Management Plans (from a tourism perspective) and also aligned to the objectives outlined in the Far West Regional Plan.

As you are the custodians of these Plans, I thought it best to connect you to continue this conversation.

Bob - please see links below for both Destination Management Plans we spoke about this morning.

Murray Regional Tourism DMP - note Pg 54
Riverina Murray DMP - note pg 62

Please reach out with any questions.

Kind regards,

Gabby

Gabby Brown

Regional Tourism Development Manager, Riverina Murray

Destination NSW

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Subject: Consistency of Northbank with new Western Murray Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022

Date: Wednesday, 31 July 2019 at 10:10:25 am Australian Eastern Standard Time

From: Bob Wheeldon

To: Gary White

<https://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/assets/dpc-nsw-gov-au/REDS/508d3c57dd/Western-Murray-REDS.pdf>

Gary

As per the link and attachment we believe the "Wentworth Eco-Resort" listed on page 17 of the Western Murray Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022 is indeed Northbank.

Given Northbank now has strategic support of Destination NSW and Department of Premier and Cabinet we request that you positively consider the Gateway Approval for Northbank. The Northbank Planning Proposal was submitted over two years ago and there is no justification for further delays in consideration of the Gateway Approval.

It could be that the Gateway Approval is granted "subject to consistency with the Wentworth Local Strategic Planning Statement".

Best
Bob Wheeldon
Grand Junction
0411 222181

STRATEGY CONTINUED

2 | Enhance and diversify the economy by leveraging growth opportunities in Tourism

Tourism is focused on the Region's rivers, arid landscape, flat topography and historical towns. The Region offers visitors rich experiences in river-based activities, food and wine, fishing, festivals, history and heritage, nature-based and business travel. Destination Riverina Murray and the cross-border Murray Regional Tourism have developed complementary destination management plans that provide a strong foundation for growth.

Infrastructure Priorities

Upgrade regional infrastructure to enhance regional profile and visitor access: Analysis of the Region's natural and human endowments, together with stakeholder consultation, identified key infrastructure projects that would help to establish the Region as a key tourist destination. These include:

- ▶ development of the Murray River Adventure Trail
- ▶ expansion of the Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery & Indigenous experience
- ▶ upgrade of Arumpo Road to ensure all weather access to Mungo National Park
- ▶ development of the Wentworth Riverfront and Eco-Resort
- ▶ development of the Mildura Motor Sports Precinct
- ▶ development of the Hay Riverfront
- ▶ development of the Shearers Hall of Fame
- ▶ development of the Hay Public Art
- ▶ development of the Nirrmlie Calra area

Organisational Priorities

Position the Region as the 'Gateway to the Outback': The Balranald and Wentworth LGAs are well positioned to act as a gateway to Aboriginal, heritage, and nature-based tourism opportunities of inland NSW and the Northern Territory. Continued collaboration and coordination between councils and business will be required.

Support cross-border collaboration: The current cross-border strategies between Mildura and Wentworth, and Swan Hill and Balranald should be supported and expanded to ensure that visitors to the Region experience the attractions available on both sides of the Murray River. This Strategy represents an opportunity to expand collaboration to provide a truly regional experience.

Support the development of new visitor experiences: Tourism opportunities that help extend the time visitors spend in the Region need to be further explored. Examples of developments include:

- ▶ a Murray Adventure Trail, a multiday trail along the river that includes driving kayaking and cycling
- ▶ use of the Region's Aerodromes to facilitate tourism
- ▶ river cruising experiences, including multiday journey routes
- ▶ regional food and drink experiences
- ▶ local events, festivals, and conferences

Strategy Outcome

Capitalise on the natural and human endowments to promote the Region as a key tourism destination

Intermediate Outcome

- ▶ Improved branding of the Region
- ▶ Improved availability of accommodation, services and experiential offerings
- ▶ Greater number of day and overnight visitors to the Region

Outputs

- ▶ Increased access to, and profile of, the Region's attractions
- ▶ Recognition of the Region as the 'Gateway to the Outback'
- ▶ Increased collaboration between businesses and councils on either side of the state border
- ▶ A wider variety of visitor experiences

Activities

- ▶ Upgrade regional infrastructure to enhance profile and access
- ▶ Position the Region as the 'Gateway to the Outback'
- ▶ Support cross-border collaboration on tourism projects and development
- ▶ Support the development of new visitor experiences

Inputs

- ▶ Resource funding for infrastructure upgrades
- ▶ Improve coordination between local councils and businesses

THE VISION

A diverse, flourishing economy built on its current strengths in high-value agriculture and agricultural product manufacturing, along with potential future strengths in mining, tourism and construction.



WESTERN MURRAY

Regional Economic Development Strategy
2018–2022



Developed with the support of the NSW Government as part of the Regional Economic Development Strategies program to assist local councils and their communities in regional NSW.



THE VISION

A diverse, flourishing economy built on its current strengths in high-value agriculture and agricultural product manufacturing, along with potential future strengths in mining, tourism and construction.



WESTERN MURRAY

Regional Economic Development Strategy

2018–2022

SUPPORTING ANALYSIS



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STRATEGY CONTINUED

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Inputs

- Resource funding for infrastructure upgrades
- Improve coordination between local councils and businesses



MURRAY REGION DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

MURRAY REGIONAL TOURISM

Murray
REGIONAL TOURISM

www.murrayregionaltourism.com.au

13. WESTERN MURRAY

13.1. DESTINATION SUMMARY

The Western Murray is a large sub-region consisting of the Councils of Mildura and Wentworth.

The region is characterised by its arid outback landscape, flat topography, and charming towns. The unique setting provides a visitor experience more akin to central Australia than the rest of the Murray Region.

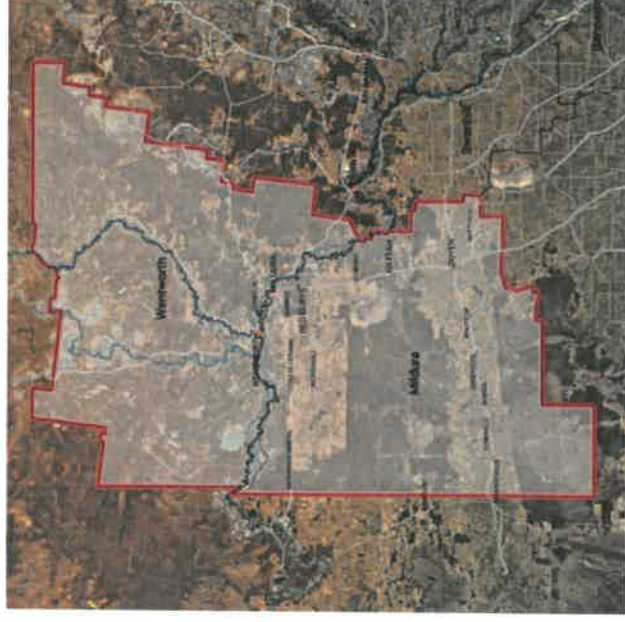
The region is an important foodbowl and major producer of grapes, fruit and citrus. There has been an increase in accessible agritourism opportunities with the development of new facilities within proximity to Mildura and Wentworth.

Nature-based tourism is the major strength of the region which includes a number of key natural sites including the culturally significant Mungo National Park, the Murray-Darling River Confluence, and Yanga National Park. The region includes the two largest rivers in Australia: Murray and Darling, making it a popular location for fishing and watersports.

Mildura is the major regional centre in the western Murray and the wider Mallee region. Wentworth is located at the confluence of Australia's two largest rivers, just 20 minutes from Mildura, and together function as important border towns. Mildura has a regional airport which services a number of major capital cities, and acts as the major gateway for visitors to the region.

The region is unique in that it consists of both Victoria and NSW, and shares a border with SA to the west.

FIGURE 22 WESTERN MURRAY



13.2. PRODUCT STRENGTHS

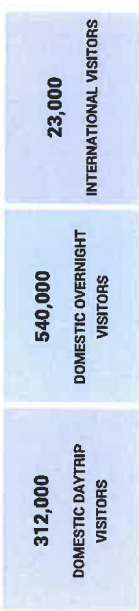
Western Murray has a number of regional product strengths as shown in Table 20.

TABLE 20 WESTERN MURRAY PRODUCT STRENGTHS

THEME	STRENGTHS	SUMMARY
Rivers and Waterways	Primary	There are a number of river systems that traverse the region making it a popular location for fishing and water sports
History and Heritage	Primary	There are a number of unique and charming outback towns throughout the region that provide a historical account of outback settlement and Australian rural life. The Chaffey Trail tells the story of how Mildura became Australia's first irrigated settlement.
Food, Wine and Agritourism	Primary	The region is known as a major 'food bowl' and prides itself on the abundance of fresh, locally grown produce. There has been a recent increase in the number of accessible farm gate experiences which have been included in a new Mildura Taste Trail.
Nature and Parks	Primary	Nature-based tourism is the major strength of the region, which boasts a number of National Parks and attractions including the iconic Mungo National Park, Yanga National Park, Hattah Kulkyne National Park, Murray Darling Confluence, and Perry Sandhills.
Golf	Primary	The region has a number of top golf clubs with riverfront courses that cater to a variety of standards.
Events	Secondary	Mildura Wentworth hosts a busy events calendar, with a particular strength in sports events.
Arts and Culture	Emerging	Mildura Wentworth has a vibrant arts community and a number of galleries and performance spaces showcasing local and touring exhibitions

13.3. VISITOR PROFILE

SUMMARY OF VISITATION TO WESTERN MURRAY (2017)



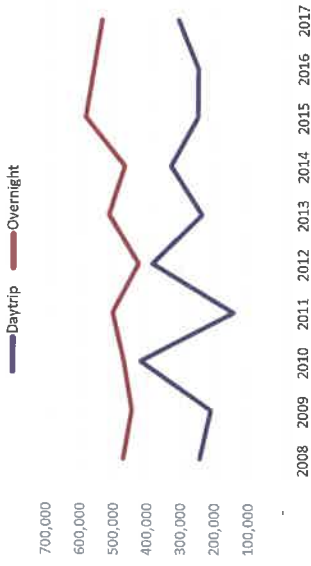
The Western Murray receives over 870,000 visitors per annum. The region experienced steady growth over the past decade. Overnight visitation grew by 70,000 visitors, and daytrips by 66,000.

Interestingly, the Western Murray receives the highest number of international visitors across the entire Murray Region. This is likely due to the high number of backpackers undertaking farm work in the region.

Analysis of the sub-region's visitor profile (using TRA data) and consultation in the region identified the following features of Mid Western Murray's market:

- 48% of overnight visitors are for the purposes of holiday/leisure, 27% are for VFR, and 18% for business purposes.
- 50% of visitors are from Victoria (25% Melbourne and 25% regional Victoria).
- The region receives a strong South Australia market with 16% of visitors from Adelaide and 9% from regional SA. NSW represents 20% of visitation.

FIGURE 23 WESTERN MURRAY VISITATION 2008-2017



Source: TRA NWS & IWS Visitation 2007-2017 ^E June

13.4. PROJECT LIST

TABLE 21 WESTERN MURRAY

TIER	LGA	LOCATION	TITLE	THEME	DESCRIPTION
1	Mildura	Mildura	Mildura Motor Sports Precinct	Sport and Recreation	Progression of the Mildura Motor Sports Precinct as outlined in the Business Case and Staged Development Plan
1	Mildura	South Mildura	Mildura South Sporting Complex	Sport and Recreation	Development of a regional sporting precinct in accordance with the Business Case. Including six indoor courts, two fields, and a 3000 seat venue which can be used for a range of purposes.
1	Mildura	Mildura	Mildura Riverfront Stage 2	The River	Stage 2 of the Riverfront development including linkages with the CBD, commercial activation, concepts for the Powerhouse building, conference centre, and other attractions
1	Mildura / Wentworth	Various	Gateway to the Outback Positioning	Nature-based	The region has the opportunity to position itself as a gateway to the Australian Outback, providing a more accessible and inexpensive experience to rival the Northern Territory.
1	Wentworth	Wentworth	Mungo All Weather Road	Infrastructure, Transport and Servicing	Lake Mungo National Park cannot be accessed from either Mildura or Barmah following rainfall, impacting on tour operators and international visitors who have booked trips to the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area. The road upgrade will also need to include the main routes through the area, as they are also not accessible following rain.
1	Wentworth	Wentworth	Wentworth Riverfront Development	The River	Long term planning for the future expansion of the Wentworth Riverfront precinct from the Wentworth Civic Centre to Willowbend Caravan Park focusing on linkages to existing facilities and concepts for future attractions. Currently at Concept Stage.
1	Wentworth	Wentworth	Wentworth Riverfront Development	Accommodation	The development of a large-scale riverfront eco resort in close proximity to Mildura and Wentworth. This is currently in the high-level concept stage but would fill an important gap and have a significant impact on the region.
2	Mildura	Mildura	Mildura Arts Centre Future Expansion	Arts, Heritage, and Culture	Long term planning for the future expansion of the arts centre to provide for greater capacity to accommodate larger exhibitions.
2	Mildura	Mildura	Mildura Passenger Rail Services	Infrastructure, Transport and Servicing	Development of rail passenger services for Mildura to connect Melbourne.
2	Mildura	TBD	Adventure Tourism Concepts	Sport and Recreation	Development of a new adventure tourism concept for the Murray to cater for the large backpacker population and provide a unique experience in the region. E.g. bungee jumping, jetboating

North bank

2	Mildura	Hattah Kulkre NP	Activation of National Parks	Nature-based	Investigate the feasibility of new types of accommodation, such as safari tents, and after-dark and early-morning tours in Hattah Kulkre NP and Kings Billabong Park, as outlined in the draft River Red Gum Management Plan
2	Mildura / Wentworth	Wentworth/ Mildura	Business Events Strategy	Festivals, Events, and Conferences	Leverage existing infrastructure to attract more business events.
2	Mildura / Wentworth	Mildura- Wentworth	Mildura Culinary Food Plan	Food, Drink and Agribusiness	An initiative by Mildura Regional Development to connect local producers to restaurants and develop Mildura's food offering.
2	Mildura / Wentworth	Mildura- Wentworth	Commercial Tour Operator Development	Infrastructure, Transport and Servicing	Positioning the region as the gateway to the outback and a number of eco-tourism opportunities, and developing as a base for commercial tour operators. Undertake a study to identify barriers and compliance issues that may be addressed.
2	Mildura / Wentworth	Mildura- Wentworth	Mildura - Gol Bridge River Crossing	Infrastructure, Transport and Servicing	There are significant traffic volume projections between Mildura and Gol and long-term planning is required to understand the need for an additional river crossing and potential bypass of the Mildura CBD
2	Wentworth	Pooncarie	Pooncarie Camping Facilities	Accommodation	Ongoing development of an RV Camping facility at Pooncarie including installation of filtered water and power. Currently seeking funding, estimated investment \$100,000.
2	Wentworth	Wentworth	Wentworth Effluent Disposal Systems	Infrastructure, Transport and Servicing	Upgrade of existing facilities at Wentworth and Darebin. These facilities are used by house boats to dispose of waste products. These facilities are 30 years old and are vital to the continued success of the house boating industry in the Mildura/Wentworth region. Designs have been prepared and the project is currently seeking funding. Estimated investment is \$2,000,000.
2	Wentworth	Mungo NP	Mungo Visitors Centre	Nature-based	Improvements to the Mungo Visitors Centre to include enhanced interpretation and story telling of the significant heritage area.
2	Wentworth	Murray- Darling Confluence	Great Murray Darling Junction Reserve	Nature-based	To implement the actions and recommendations of the Great Murray Darling Junction Reserve Plan of Management. Currently seeking funding, estimated investment \$2,000,000. This includes improved access, interpretive displays, and potential water interpretation installations
2	Wentworth	Buronga	Buronga Riverfront	Nature-based	Implement the actions/recommendations of the Buronga Riverfront Master Plan. Currently seeking funding, estimated investment \$1,000,000.
2	Wentworth	Wentworth	Aviation Precinct	Infrastructure, Transport and Servicing	Long-term planning for the Wentworth Airport to seal the runway (business case already complete), and investigate opportunities to increase private aviation, emergency services, and residential development (private hangars adjoined to residential). This would need to complement the commercial role of Mildura Airport
3	Wentworth	Wentworth	Wentworth Willow Bend Caravan Park	Accommodation	Council has secured a new operator on two-year contract and is looking to upgrade the park. Currently in the planning stage with an estimated \$3m of investment required.

3	Wentworth	Trenttham	Caravan Park Refurbishment	Accommodation	Refurbishment of an existing caravan park to improve the visitor offering and attract new markets
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Planning &
Environment

2036

Far West

***Regional
Plan***

Implementation Plan 2017-2019

Priority actions for 2017-2019

Priorities for the Far West are growing and diversifying the economy, protecting environmental assets, providing efficient transport and infrastructure networks, and developing strong, resilient and connected communities. Actions to support these outcomes represent the immediate areas of focus.

10 priority actions have been identified for implementation in 2017–2019. These actions respond to strong representations made in feedback to the draft Regional Plan or are areas where initial investigations or planning are required. These priorities will be overseen by the Far West Delivery, Coordination and Monitoring Committee and will require a collaborative effort involving multiple agencies, councils and stakeholders.

- 1 Promote agribusiness diversification by reviewing local plans and removing planning barriers.
- 2 Develop and implement land management arrangements to ensure continuity of supply for the emerging goat industry.
- 3 Align local land use and tourism strategies with the relevant Destination Management Plan.
- 4 Identify the regional freight network (including key national, State, regional and local roads and the rail network).
- 5 Prepare and implement a waterfront management strategy for the Murray River.
- 6 Undertake modelling with local communities to better understand the implications and factors contributing to population change.
- 7 Work with stakeholders, including Aboriginal housing providers and prescribed body corporates, to identify opportunities for social and affordable housing options to meet the distinct cultural needs of Aboriginal communities.
- 8 Conduct a pilot project to progressively improve mineral claims process around Lightning Ridge.
- 9 Support pilot projects and opportunities that empower Aboriginal people to develop tourism businesses as a means of increasing economic participation on country.
- 10 Work with the Local Aboriginal Land Councils to identify landholdings and map the level of constraint for each site at a strategic scale to develop options for the potential commercial use of the land.

4	Direction 4: Diversify energy supply through renewable energy generation				
	Action	Initiative or Strategy	Governance		
			Responsibility ¹	Partner ²	Timing ³
4.1	Identify areas and project sites with renewable energy potential, and infrastructure corridors with access to the electricity network, to inform land use planning.	Initiative	DPE	Council, DOI	Short Term
4.2	Promote best practice community engagement to realise community benefits for all utility-scale renewable energy projects.	Strategy	DPE	Council, DOI	Ongoing
4.3	Facilitate small-scale renewable energy projects using bioenergy, solar, wind, small-scale hydro, geothermal or other innovative storage technologies through local environment plans.	Strategy	Council	DOI	Ongoing

5	Direction 5: Promote tourism opportunities				
	Action	Initiative or Strategy	Governance		
			Responsibility ¹	Partner ²	Timing ³
5.1	Implement Destination NSW's Draft Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan 2017 – 2020 when finalised.	Initiative	Destination NSW	Council, DCONSW	Ongoing
5.2	Expand Aboriginal Export Ready Tour Products by partnering with relevant stakeholders.	Strategy	Destination NSW	Council, LALC, AANSW, DCONSW	Medium Term
5.3	Consult with native title holders, particularly prescribed body corporates, to determine how land subject to native title rights may be utilised in the tourism sector.	Strategy	NPWS	Prescribed Body Corporates, LALC	Ongoing
5.4	Implement the Line of Lode Redevelopment Strategy.	Initiative	DOI	Council, DPC	Ongoing
5.5	Improve access and infrastructure for the tourism sector, focusing on all-weather transport routes.	Strategy	TfNSW	Council, DPE	Ongoing
5.6	Investigate development of a regional tourism trail between Balranald, Wentworth, Mallee Cliffs, Mungo and Yanga floodplains; and between White Cliffs, Menindee, Tibooburra and Silverton.	Initiative	Council	DCONSW, DPC	Medium Term
5.7	Investigate development of a Far West Sculpture Trail encompassing sites at Broken Hill, Mutawintji, White Cliffs and Wilcannia.	Initiative	Council	DCONSW, DPC	Medium Term
5.8	Align local land use and tourism strategies with the relevant Destination Management Plan.	Initiative	Council	DCONSW, DPE	Immediate
5.9	Identify opportunities for tourism and associated land uses in local plans.	Initiative	Council	DCONSW, DPE	Short Term

¹ Responsibility: Indicates who leads the investigation, assessment and decision-making for land use planning.

² Partner: Indicates who supports the lead and takes an active role in land use planning

³ Timing: immediate: 0-2 years, short term: 3-5 years, medium term: 5-10 years, long term: 10+ years, ongoing – strategies

Council: Includes all Councils in the Far West Region; DPE: Department of Planning and Environment; TfNSW: Transport for NSW; DOI: Department of Industry; DPC: Department of Premier and Cabinet; OEH: Office of Environment and Heritage; NPWS: National Parks and Wildlife Services; DRG: Division of Resources and Geosciences; OGA: Office of the Government Architect; CBC: NSW Cross Border Commissioner; MDBA: Murray Darling Basin Authority; AANSW: NSW Aboriginal Affairs; OLG: Office of Local Government; EPA: Environment Protection Authority; FACS: Department of Family and Community Services; LALC: Local Aboriginal Land Council; RMS: Roads and Maritime Services; RFS: Rural Fire Services; LLS: Local Land Services; CMC: Far West Delivery, Coordination and Monitoring Committee; Education: Department of Education; Health: Health NSW; DCONSW: Destination Country & Outback NSW; SES: State Emergency Service; Create NSW: Create NSW; WaterNSW: WaterNSW; DPI Water: Department of Primary Industry Water.