Berri Barmera Council
Loxton Waikerie Council
Renmark Paringa Council

Towards 2015 and Beyond
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

Working with Riverland businesses
to grow the visitor economy

September 2011

ADVANCE TOURISM
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Loxton Waikerie Council
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This project kindly funded by

The Australian Government
Strengthening Basin Communities Program

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ADVANCE TOURISM
Preface

Tourism is a commercial industry
like farming, mining, manufacturing, retailing and many others.
Some wrongly see tourism as a government department

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Every commercial operation whether it be BHP, Qantas or a small business including tourism destination marketing organisations needs all the functions shown in the diagram to perform in a balanced manner for their operations to be successful. Main elements are

- **Product to sell** that appeals to target markets. Just having product without knowing about demand levels and who will buy the products is not a sound commercial practice. Some believe an old fashioned tale that product brings visitors. This is real 1980s thinking no longer relevant in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century digital era.

- **Customers to buy**. There are plenty of customers who should be visiting the region but are not buying holidays in the Riverland. There is plenty of product in the Riverland, mostly under-utilised. A good example is that apart from peak holiday periods too many houseboats are idle tied to the river bank and not being hired in Paringa, Renmark, Berri, Waikerie and other locations. This shows that product does not bring customers. **Existing product in the Riverland needs better destination marketing and more customers, not more competition.**

TOURISM TODAY IS A VERY DIFFERENT INDUSTRY TO THE 20\textsuperscript{TH} CENTURY

In the second decade of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, tourism marketing is vastly different to the 1980s and 1990s but the SA tourism industry state-wide is still using out-of-date practices. Customers everywhere, when contemplating a leisure travel experience no longer look for brochures first. Instead, they go first to websites for details of places they are thinking of visiting. Or they are responding to e-newsletters and other market communication advices which direct them to a website. Add to this, the huge number of new digital era online booking systems like Wotif, Quickbeds, travel.com.au and many, many more, nearly all of them carry NO Riverland product because Riverland tourism businesses are not using 21\textsuperscript{st} century digital era merchandising practices and pricing policies.

TOURISM IS IMPORTANT PART OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY

Around the world, political leaders like President Obama, NZ Prime Minister John Key, UK Prime Minister David Cameron and many other political leaders use the term “visitor economy” to describe their tourism industry. This is because they see tourism as the key part of a wider visitor industry. Around the world, the term “visitor economy” is widely used by governments instead of “tourism industry”. The difference between the three terms is explained as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourism industry</th>
<th>An industry mainly of small businesses who provide visitors with accommodation, attractions, tours, cruises, hospitality, art galleries, museums, conference facilities and transport services</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitor industry</td>
<td>This industry provides services and facilities that complement the tourism industry like sporting facilities (golf, bowls, motor sports, tennis courts, football matches, etc.), events (garden shows, entertainment shows, agriculture shows, etc) retailers, hairdressers, motor vehicle repairers, etc</td>
</tr>
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Visitor economy

This describes the revenues and taxes earned from visitors to a destination which are used to pay locally for salaries, services, supplies, etc. They also contribute to Council and community facilities like museums, golf course, etc. Visitors also pay taxes. The Tasmanian Government recently acknowledged that because of their severe drop in visitors from interstate, their GST receipts were down accordingly.

Most important of all, the visitor economy is built on the commercial success of tourism and associated businesses serving visitors at the destination.

EFFECTIVE DESTINATION MARKETING IS DIRECTLY LINKED TO NEW INVESTMENT

Destination marketing targeting increased visitor numbers as customers can only be successful when it is offering enjoyable experiences to visitors by tourism and associated businesses. An important part of the appeal of any destination is

1. Delivery of quality products and services which appeal to potential customers, and
2. Continuing to attract investment in growth of existing businesses plus new products and services to keep the destination fresh and appealing.

Attracting investors relies on keeping visitor industry businesses prosperous.

People who are focussed only on attracting more product without fully considering the factors above are only showing their lack of understanding of tourism industry operations. IT ALSO NEEDS TO BE KEPT IN MIND THAT THE BENEFITS OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY ONLY FLOW THROUGH TO THE COMMUNITY WHEN TOURISM AND ASSOCIATED BUSINESSES ARE PROSPEROUS AND VIABLE.

NOT A TRADITIONAL INDUSTRY, TOURISM IS OFTEN NOT WELL TREATED

Tourism as an industry is often not treated like other commercial industries because it has two characteristics different to other industries

1. Tourism is about intangible experiences and customers enjoying themselves. Tourism does not produce tangible products like bottles of wine, food products or hardware, etc or provide services like TV repairmen or plumbers, etc,
2. Tourism is an export industry which has to earn its income from distant markets against very tough competition. Most industries produce or manufacture their products and then take them some distance to the points of sale where customers can see them locally before making a purchase. By comparison, tourism cannot take its products to the customers to buy. Tourism customers, sight unseen, have to be persuaded to come to the product or destination against tough competition from anywhere around the world.

If destination marketing is not competitive, like the Riverland presently, customers stay away as they are doing now.

TOURISM WORLD-WIDE IS DRIVEN BY COMMERCIAL OUTCOMES

World-wide, tourism is no longer a government managed industry. The commercial operations of destination marketing and industry development are now managed by destination marketing organisations that operate as business units managed by executives with private sector business and tourism backgrounds.

Shown on the next page are details of Canadian Tourism Commission operations. Other examples are shown within the plan.
Shown below are extracts from the Canadian Tourism Commission Corporate website. This shows that Canada's National Tourism Office has a commercial approach which is carried through to the Province Tourism Organisations (State Tourism Organisations in Australia) and in turn to Regional Tourism Organisations like Tourism Victoria on Vancouver Island and Tourism Saskatoon in the Province of Saskatchewan. Canada is consistent with world-wide practice. This philosophy is delivering tourism industry growth in Canada like other countries.

South Australia, like some other Australian states, has a different approach to Canada and other countries of the world but sadly much of Australia's domestic tourism industry is in decline because it is not following international standard practice.

**EXTRACTS FROM CANADA TOURISM COMMISSION CORPORATE WEBSITE**

**Our Mandate**
A Crown corporation\(^1\) wholly owned by the Government of Canada, we report to Parliament through the Minister of Industry. Our legislated mandate is to:

- Sustain a vibrant and profitable Canadian tourism industry.
- Market Canada as a desirable tourism destination.
- Support a cooperative relationship between the private sector and the governments of Canada, the provinces and the territories with respect to Canadian tourism.
- Provide information about Canadian tourism to the private sector and to the governments of Canada, the provinces and the territories.

**Our Mission**
Our mission is to harness Canada's collective voice to grow tourism export revenues.

Tourism is big business. Travellers from around the world and in Canada spent more than $74.1 billion in 2010 experiencing all that Canada has to offer. Nearly $14.8 billion of this amount—or 20%—is new money coming into Canada's economy from international visitors. Because Canada's provinces, cities and regions are already largely invested in marketing to Canadians, our focus is on keeping international tourism revenue streams flowing into the country.

A thriving tourism sector benefits Canadians from coast to coast to coast and accounts for 610,600 jobs. Tourism's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reached $29.5 billion in 2010 and represents approximately 2% of Canada's overall GDP.

Small— and medium—size tourism businesses (SMEs) are the heart of Canada's tourism industry. Some 178,000 tourism-related businesses operate in Canada, from small family—owned bed and breakfasts to national tour companies—each with their own marketing plan.

Our job is to take Canada's most extraordinary tourism experiences and opportunities and promote a strong and consistent image of our country to the world through Canada's tourism brand, "Canada. Keep Exploring."

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\(^1\) A federal Crown corporation in Canada is a corporation established by the federal government to deliver public policy when the government feels that government departments, other levels of government or the private sector cannot adequately do so. CTC operates free of bureaucratic controls so that it can enter into commercial arrangements. As an example, here in Australia, CTC has entered into commercial arrangements with several tour wholesaling operations to jointly market Canada to Australia consumers. CTC operations in Australia all have at least one product offer in conjunction with the selected wholesalers.
# Riverland Tourism Development Plan

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**Executive Summary**

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## PART A – Visitor Industry Business Environment

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<td>A4</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5</td>
<td>37</td>
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### Riverland tourism in crisis

- Impact of drought and floods
- Riverland far from competitive
- Competitive situation – lack of action
- Skilled leadership and management key to success
- Major industry shortcoming – leadership and management
- Local attitudes limiting success
- Riverland trends are very serious
- Need to modernise marketing operations ignored
- No embrace of digital era
- Tourism skills not progressed
- Psyche of the industry
- Major management reform vital for success

### Successful tourism industry structures

- Tourism industry operates on two levels
- Public/private sector differences
- Roles of Destination Marketing Organisations different
- Plan outcomes

### Riverland Futures Fund Tourism Investment Objectives

- The right people make a difference
- If the right people are not recruited

### Aim of the plan

- Levels of private sector down to zero
- No quick fix for state of the industry
- Draft Plan Program Diagram
- Plan is about restoring economic health

### Measuring performance of the plan

## PART B – Towards 2015 – Outline Plan

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<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- New organisation -Destination Riverland
# Riverland Tourism Development Plan

- Phases of the Marketing Plan
- Digital marketing
- Raising Riverland awareness
- Towns and villages clusters
- Market communication activities
- Sector marketing plans
- Product development
- Development of market sectors
- Competitive environment
- Competitive disadvantage - digital marketing
- Target markets
- New Approach to business development
- Visitor Information Centres

## PART C – Leadership and Management

- Business operating environment
- Biggest constraint on better results
- Tourism operations seen as “Best practice”
- Riverland far from “best practice” (incl overseas examples)
- SATC contribution to visitor numbers
- Working with other sectors
- Research and Regional Visitor Monitor
- Destination Marketing Organisations world-wide
- New RTO operations - Destination Riverland
- Destination Riverland – Proposed structure
- PR Publicity support
- Member support
- Funding the Plan
- Performance monitoring
- Local community support

## ATTACHMENTS

- Great Murray River Walk
- Food and Wine
- Nightlife
- Houseboats
- Events
- Golf
- Nature including birds
- Motor Sports
- Meetings and Conferences
- Accommodation
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

Towards 2015 and Beyond
Working with Riverland businesses to grow the visitor economy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between 2000 and 2010, the Riverland tourism industry suffered a 35.8% drop in visitor numbers. Concerned about the economic health of the tourism industry, the three Riverland Councils combined to obtain a grant from the Australian Government Strengthening Basin Communities Program for a plan to rejuvenate the economy of the industry.

This plan, commissioned by the Riverland Councils, with a Federal Government grant, first assesses the cause of the serious decline of visitors and then provides a strategic direction to

- Restructure industry operations,
- A Marketing Plan to quickly rejuvenate the economic health of the private sector, and
- Achieve sustainability for the industry by 2015 so that never again does the industry suffer such a serious downturn in its economic performance.

This plan is not an uncoordinated list of independent ideas which amount to nothing more than short term tactical activities with no long term benefit.

CAUSE OF THIS SERIOUS VISITOR DOWNTURN WAS NOT JUST DROUGHT AND FLOODS

A MAJOR CAUSE WAS MISMANAGEMENT OF REGION’S RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS, IN FACT THERE WAS NO RESPONSE, NOTHING WAS DONE.

This serious setback for the Riverland tourism industry resulted from a failure by the public sector to respond. The public sector insists on managing the commercial operations of a private sector industry using bureaucratic administrative methods, not modern, business driven, commercial strategies which includes reacting to visitor number downturns.

Although the period 2000-2010 was beset with unusual weather patterns which caused a drought, floods and a slump in visitors, had destination marketing been managed by an experienced, professional, private sector tourism management, standard practice would have been to react, as early as 2002, to develop strategies to minimise losses and produce market development programs tapping new demand just like any other commercial industry would do.

Management by the public sector has meant essential destination marketing skills were lacking to launch such strategies, Riverland tourism businesses have had to suffer revenue losses of over $200 million which are still continuing at a rate of $41 million pa.

Managing Riverland destination marketing by the public sector over this period has proved very expensive for the Riverland Visitor Economy and for the tourism industry.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT STUDY ON IMPACT OF DROUGHT

Because of the national drought between 2000 and 2008 having a serious impact on visitor numbers along the Murray River, in 2010 the Federal Government joined with the State Tourism Organisations of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia to conduct a study to research the affects of the drought on demand levels. The study produced results at state level but offered limited value for regions and sub-regions.

The value of this report was limited also because it did not include details of any action by the South Australian Tourism Commission at any time during 2000-2010 or subsequently to alleviate the downturn in visitors. In fact there was none. The report only served to distract attention from the poor management of the crisis by the public sector.
PERFORMANCE INADEQUACIES DURING DROUGHT AND FLOODS
Factors that led to a poor public sector response included the following

No strategic marketing
While visitor numbers declined over the whole period there was no strategic destination marketing aimed at reversing the trend and creating new demand. There were no countermeasures launched to arrest the decline, no market demand initiatives to stimulate new demand and no PR strategies to counter the declining image of the destination.

Public sector believes it has no responsibility in this regard.
The public sector believes it is not their responsibility to react to any decline in visitor numbers, that it is for the private sector to do. But the public sector does not say who in the private sector is able to undertake this task because all destination marketing in regional SA, and the resources needed, have been controlled by SATC from Adelaide.

Very concerning
During the preparation of this plan, it was very concerning to note a lack of public sector interest or concern for the serious economic situation faced by Riverland tourism and other private sector visitor industry businesses. This is a very good reason why the return of private sector management of the region’s destination marketing organisation to the private sector is so important.

REVENUE LOSSES
Revenue losses for the industry since 2000 are over $200 million
These revenue losses were caused by a 35.8% decline in visitors between 2000 and 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic overnight visitors</th>
<th>(’000)</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>% Var 00 cf 09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td></td>
<td>2419</td>
<td>2286</td>
<td>2241</td>
<td>2186</td>
<td>2436</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2199</td>
<td>2247</td>
<td>2117</td>
<td>2062</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>- 21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg SA</td>
<td>3714</td>
<td>3525</td>
<td>3556</td>
<td>3537</td>
<td>3666</td>
<td>3245</td>
<td>3318</td>
<td>3386</td>
<td>3115</td>
<td>2937</td>
<td>2683</td>
<td>2683</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverland</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>- 35.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5862</td>
<td>5529</td>
<td>5544</td>
<td>5122</td>
<td>5796</td>
<td>5005</td>
<td>5292</td>
<td>5414</td>
<td>4990</td>
<td>4746</td>
<td>4585</td>
<td>- 21.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism Research Australia

During 2009-2010-2011, revenue losses for the industry have exceeded $108 million
Slumping visitor numbers of – 35.8% have led to an estimated lost revenue for visitor industry businesses during 2009, 2010 and 2011 that will exceed $108 million.

Decline in visitors over recent years has accelerated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year ended</th>
<th>Vis ’000</th>
<th>c.f. 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>DOWN 11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>DOWN 33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>DOWN 26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>DOWN 35.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current trading conditions for 2011, so far, indicate a likely further serious decline.

Decline in visitor nights also very serious compared with 2003
Not only have actual visitor numbers declined by 35.8% since 2000, but visitor nights have also declined by -37.9 % since 2003. Figures for 2000-2002 could not be obtained from SATC.
LEVEL OF PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN TOURISM DOWN TO ZERO

Because of the poor economic health of the Riverland tourism industry, banks and other sources for investment capital are not making funds available for tourism investments in the Riverland currently. Many existing businesses wanting to sell cannot get buyers because potential buyers can’t borrow the capital needed to purchase the business.

There is no investment being made in Riverland tourism infrastructure currently. One leading Riverland tourism business has the financial capacity to borrow for upgrading their operation but will not do so in a climate of falling visitor numbers because of debt servicing needs.

The return on investment by the industry at the moment is very poor, some in the negative. Houseboats contracted to local managers by absentee owners are reporting owners being extremely unhappy that their investments are not producing satisfactory returns.

It is ludicrous for anyone to suggest that any product development initiatives will attract investors in this climate.

VISITOR ECONOMY

TOURISM IS IMPORTANT PART

Around the world, political leaders like President Obama, NZ Prime Minister John Key, UK Prime Minister David Cameron and many others use the term “visitor economy” to describe their tourism industry. They see tourism as the key part of a wider visitor industry.

With retailing, events, food and wine, golf, motor sports and other local activities being a key part of attracting visitors, the term Visitor Economy is very applicable to the Riverland today.

Governments around the world see the visitor industry and Visitor Economy becoming very important to their economies.

BUSINESS OPERATING CONSTRAINTS

Key factors that have impacted adversely on better Riverland tourism industry results include

1. No strategies launched to counter the downturn
2. No market development strategies initiated,
3. No competitor analysis at any level to discover why Riverland was losing visitors to other destinations,
4. No awareness of the commercial importance of catering to the new impulse buying market,
5. A complete lack of awareness of the impact of technology especially the digital era,
6. No awareness of competitors using modern merchandising methods and new yield management practices to boost visitor numbers,
7. Awareness of the Riverland in key markets like Adelaide is at a very low ebb exacerbated by negative publicity associated with the drought and floods which was not countered
8. No strategic marketing has been in place throughout the last decade, just occasional tactical advertising which has had little long term residual value
9. All marketing has been focussed on destination promotion with no targeted marketing to stimulate bookings and new demand,
10. The Riverland Tourism Association with it’s limited resources has not had much scope to fulfil its aims because of industry policy being controlled from Adelaide. Also, private sector stakeholders have had no scope to influence the development and execution of strategic destination marketing programs and policies
SERIOUS STRUCTURAL SHORTCOMINGS

There are four major structural shortcomings limiting better results for Riverland Tourism.

Embrace of the digital era

Other Australian commercial industries and tourism industries overseas have embraced this latest technology to improve their operating and marketing performances, but not SA regional tourism under public sector control. This is having a serious deleterious impact on Riverland tourism results.

Competition being ignored

Under public sector management, the Riverland tourism industry is acting as if it has no competition. It is a factor not taken into account when assessing reasons for visitor number declines. No other commercial industry ignores its competition, just the SA tourism industry.

With it’s lack of attention to competitive operations, the Riverland is a long way behind destination marketing standards in the modern era.

Management and marketing skills have not been advanced

A huge gap exists between the present standard of management, marketing skills and business ethos needed for the Riverland’s Destination Marketing Organisation if it is to become more effective and more competitive using modern era methods.

Present management reflects a bureaucratic, government department approach, not an entrepreneurial, innovative and cooperative business unit driven by business outcomes, entrepreneurial marketing and an ability to secure cooperative marketing partnerships with other key organisations in the tourism and travel industries.

The Riverland tourism industry is using 1990s methods when its competition is using latest digital era methods in the second decade of the 21st century. Riverland destination marketing is 20 years behind modern practices.

Development of skills and expertise

A high percentage of Riverland tourism enterprises have been neglected in terms of helping them to be more effective and more prosperous business units.

Current public sector policies largely leave these small businesses to their own devices and own initiatives to become better informed about industry operations. This is a silly attitude.

Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) can only be fully effective when their stakeholder members are joining with it to pursue common goals. This calls for the region to also have it’s tourism businesses using modern approaches for

- Digital marketing,
- Merchandising methods,
- Modern yield management practices.
- A focus on using modern methods to capture more business (visitors).

If the Riverland tourism industry is to be fully effective, Destination Riverland must assist industry stakeholders to introduce modern marketing policies and practices
CURRENT TOURISM OPERATIONS WRONGLY SEEN AS “BEST PRACTICE”

After decades of public sector management of SA’s tourism industry at all levels, a local view has become entrenched that current marketing of the Riverland tourism industry is performing at industry “best practice”. If this were true, why are visitor numbers so depressed? This thinking is far from correct. Riverland tourism industry operations have some very serious shortcomings that need to be addressed.

COMPETITIVE OPERATIONS – LACK OF ACTION

Serious deficiencies have been impacting adversely on Riverland tourism results as follows

- Websites not competitive.
- Online booking arrangements not competitive
- New merchandising methods not embraced
- No action to adopt modern yield management methods
- No action to focus on capturing business from the fast growing impulse buying market
- No response to competition resulting from introduction of low cost airlines
- Lack of responses to market downturns
- Lack of market development initiatives

A fundamental function of every commercial operation is to pursue market development initiatives

- To grow demand under operating normal circumstances, and
- Particularly when faced with declining demand levels. The Riverland tourism industry during recent years has been buffeted by affects of different market downturns including the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), negative publicity about lower Murray River levels during the drought and adverse reports about high water levels during the recent floods.

Over the last decade there have been no market development initiatives in either category under public sector management of Riverland destination marketing. The only conclusion that can be reached is that the public sector does not have the skills or expertise to develop such sophisticated marketing.

COMPETITIVE DISADVANTAGE - DIGITAL MARKETING

ONE OF THE RIVERLAND’S MAJOR MARKETING SHORTCOMINGS

Embracing the digital era at a competitive level after 11 years of neglect will take considerable effort, skills and resources. Unless the seriousness of this situation is addressed, the competitive disadvantage which exists presently can only be prolonged. THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE. This is about contemporary business operations and the tough competitive nature of the tourism industry.

Uninformed people in SA are treating this issue lightly. Until digital marketing in the Riverland reaches an optimum operating level, the region will face

- An inability to be competitive which will mean further lost visitor patronage, and
- Not be able to lower destination marketing costs
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

Inhibiting a better performance of the Riverland tourism industry has been a complete absence of any business ethos to drive business development initiatives. There have been no proactive activities to develop new markets, expand market sectors or create new demand for various product sectors.

Because of public sector policies dominating the region, emphasis has been on promoting the destination while the private sector, like the rest of the world, would far prefer to pursue business generation objectives. The public sector is inflexible in this regard and there will be no change until the independently managed Destination Marketing Organisation is established.

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### PLAN TO

**RESTORE ECONOMIC HEALTH OF RIVERLAND TOURISM INDUSTRY IN SHORT TERM AND ACHIEVE INDUSTRY SUSTAINABILITY IN LONG TERM**

Key elements of this plan are as follows:

1. An independent private sector managed Regional Tourism Organisation to be formed in accordance with international standard practice. It will operate as a business unit accountable to stakeholders and funding agencies for results achieved. Recommended that it be titled Destination Riverland, in line with new titles for tourism organisations.

2. Focus on business outcomes not endless unsuccessful tactical activities promoting the destination. Modern approach is to target business while still promoting the destination.

3. Public sector government administrative and promotional activities replaced with business driven methods to boost the visitor economy.

4. Top priority will be to make use of private sector business, entrepreneurial and innovative skills to develop new demand by working with a variety of industry partners within the region and in target markets. To also include greater availability of Riverland product in third party distribution channels.

5. **Essential.** Proven, experienced industry talent to be recruited from outside SA to manage execution of the plan and work with Riverland tourism industry to raise the business performances of the industry. Not to recruit candidates from interstate and maybe New Zealand with private sector extensive competitive commercial experience will be detrimental to the plan and the future economic success of the Riverland visitor industry.

6. Proper strategic planning with measured outcomes to be standard procedure,

7. Introduction of modern digital marketing, major upgrades to the destination websites and other modern marketing tools will be essential,

8. Programs for sector development including programs to provide a higher profile for towns and smaller villages of the region to be a priority,

9. Working closely with visitor industry partners in the Riverland to assist them with developing programs to lift their results which will be of mutual benefit of the DMO,

10. Use tourism marketing to raise demand for locally produced Riverland products and artworks,

11. Build appeal and demand of the region with more effective PR publicity, and

12. **Most important, produce the results which would lead to banks and investment capital funding sources once again making capital available for investment in tourism across the region**
RIVERLAND FUTURES FUND
Tourism Investment Objectives

The Riverland Sustainable Futures Fund (RSFF) announced in February 2010 that $20 million was available to facilitate the region’s economic recovery by encouraging further investment in existing businesses, and assisting the region diversify its economic base. The fund is accessible by organisations and businesses to fund projects that “improve infrastructure, support industry attraction and help grow existing businesses”.

PURPOSE OF THE FUND

It is expected that over time, the RSFF will deliver structural change, popular growth and employment outcomes to the Riverland, by supporting viable projects that:

1. Assist to diversify the economic base of the Riverland, or build on the existing competitive advantages of the Riverland
2. Create sustainable new employment opportunities,
3. Increase the region's living standards
4. Sustain or increase population.
5. Ensure the key enablers of the economy are in place, eg, economic and social infrastructure,
6. Build additional competitiveness and social capacity,
7. Increase local, national and international investment in the region

This Tourism Plan meets the criteria shown above.

Futures fund objectives

The 20 year Investment Objectives promulgated by the Riverland Futures Taskforce list these Investment Attraction Objectives and Performance Indicators for tourism are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional visitor nights²</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2026</th>
<th>2031</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investment $m additional</td>
<td>$26m</td>
<td>$43m</td>
<td>$85m</td>
<td>$128m</td>
<td>$171m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For tourism, it is hard to see the 20 year Investment Objectives being achieved without major reforms, realistic funding support for any strategic plan targeting business growth and restructuring of industry operations. This plan is designed to repair the serious damage caused by Riverland visitor numbers falling 35.8% since 2000 due to recent drought and floods which have led to the decline in the economic health of visitor industry businesses of the region.

SHORT TERM TACTICAL INITIATIVES WILL NOT BE SUCCESSFUL

For over a decade, the region has suffered

- A 35.8 % drop in visitors,
- Revenue losses of over $200 million with losses currently running at $41 million per annum,
- Skills and expertise for modern competitive driven marketing strategies lost to the region,
- Region is far from competitive with 2011 destination marketing strategies outside SA,
- Relationships between tourism and other sectors of the visitor economy in the Riverland far from adequate, and

² All investment objectives are expressed in 2010 dollars
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

- MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, existing staff in SA tourism have not shown they have the modern marketing skills and expertise to deliver strategies to rejuvenate the industry.

A plan of short term tactical initiatives has been proposed as a means of restoring the industry to economic health. All this plan will do is provide limited short term gain but within 3-4 years, the Riverland will be back where it is today. A good example of this was a SATC Recharge campaign in 2009 for houseboats on the Murray River. At the time, it attracted an upsurge in bookings but it had no lasting value as recent results show.

**Rejuvenating the Riverland tourism industry will take three years and an injection of millions of dollars for any plan to succeed.**

The Riverland’s tourism industry operations are in difficulties, visitor levels are down 35.8% and over $200 million in revenues lost because they have been managed for far too long by the public and political system and not by proven industry commercial managements. But some in the public sector think a “rag bag” of uncoordinated activities will fix the problem.

Experienced commercial people know that wont work. Over ten years of damage can’t be fixed overnight. It is going to take three years, over $4 million and a team of competent, experienced tourism industry executives to get the industry back to 2000 levels, as a minimum, and also deliver sustainably well into the future.

**LACK OF SKILLED LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**MAJOR CAUSE OF POOR INDUSTRY RESULTS RECENTLY**

For the region to be rejuvenated, it needs competitive standard private sector leadership and management. *This standard of leadership and management has not been provided for the Riverland tourism industry over the last 20 years which is another major reason why current results are so poor.*

No organisation can succeed and grow without strong, competent, results oriented leadership and management. Tourism is a commercial industry and the Destination Marketing Organisation needs to have a Board of private sector visitor industry executives experienced in strategic management with a very competent management team. Qualities they need include

- A vision for the future of the organisation and its constituent parts,
- Being driven by business growth with its flow on benefits for local economies,
- Being results oriented which means development of new potential, capturing business opportunities and reacting to market developments,
- Being cognisant of the need to be competitive at all times including embracing technology advances,
- Being able to motivate staff, associates in the industry important to the organisation’s performance and customers who buy their products.

There is no difference between the leadership and management standards required for Destination Riverland and other commercial organisations like News Ltd (SA), Sealink, Great Southern Railway, Coles, Woolworths, Bunnings and many other smaller operations.

**RIGHT PEOPLE NEEDED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

This plan is based on the usual commercial industry attitude that it is people, the right people, who will make this plan work. It is important to import experienced executives familiar with modern tourism competitive operations and can use this knowledge to get the right results.

Parochialism and politics will probably favour appointing South Australians. As parochialism has only delivered declining results for over a decade, it is time to put private sector needs first and choose proven tourism executives from outside SA who can deliver a better performance.
The people to be recruited also need to show good leadership and management skills as well as good business acumen and be held accountable for results being achieved.

**If the right people are not recruited**

If the management team recruited does not come with
- A proven background in 21st century digital marketing skills and expertise,
- A sound knowledge of the competitive environment,
- Previous commercial experience in tourism competitive marketing strategies and
- An entrepreneurial approach to help rejuvenate the industry with market development initiatives and business development strategies to counter the downturn,

little progress with reforms will be possible.

A new management team drawn from long serving tourism industry appointments in the bureaucratically driven SA tourism industry will not advance the skills levels of the Riverland tourism industry. SA tourism has failed to demonstrate any competitive initiatives for industry development over the last 20 years and all that can be expected will be “more of the same”.

Just throwing taxpayer funds at a “rag bag” of uncoordinated ideas just to appear to be doing something will also not help the industry to raise its marketing performance to 21st century competitive standards or to deliver a strong, growing, prosperous and sustainable Riverland tourism industry well into the future.

This plan is titled “Towards 2015 and Beyond’ because it is a strategic plan not just to boost demand in the short term but to restructure industry operations for the long term. This will be difficult to achieve with long serving SA tourism staff when proven, experienced executives with a private sector background from outside SA are needed.

**Strategic Plan**

**The Challenge**

Three aspects to the challenge that the Riverland tourism industry faces

1. The need to recover a decade of destination marketing neglect by bringing Riverland tourism industry businesses and the Destination Marketing Organisation up to competitive standards. This will be a three year task. It should not be expected to be completed any quicker,

2. To join other elements of the Riverland visitor industry for joint activities

3. Very important. Reforming tourism industry operations so by 2015, the region is ready for the next phase of wide industry development, new industry structures and commercial operations.

**Strategic Direction**

The strategic direction for the next three years aims to
- Make the Riverland tourism industry more competitive with a focus on market development,
- Initially short term marketing strategies needed to build cash flows for tourism businesses,
- Introduce professional standard destination marketing planning that builds demand for the Riverland through professional targeted marketing, PR publicity and promotions,
- Develop marketing plans for various industry sectors,
- Help tourism businesses to introduce competitive 21st century marketing techniques so as to access new markets including third party distribution channels,
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

- Concentrate most marketing activities and marketing funds on Adelaide and Regional SA markets plus some Western Victoria activities
- Restructure Riverland tourism operations so that from 2015 onwards, the industry and Destination Riverland will be sustainable with qualified leadership and management, modern industry structures and a higher level of skills being used by tourism businesses.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Key objectives are
1. To reverse the depressed state of the industry in the near term,
2. To champion a successful, growing, competitive, prosperous tourism industry for the long term,
3. To offer visitors a range of towns and villages throughout the region,
4. To facilitate greater engagement between visitors and the many experiences that the region offers,
5. To introduce professional standard destination marketing management,
6. **To introduce accountability**

PLAN IS IN THREE PHASES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Plan Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>Create an independent Destination Riverland, introduce a new independent private sector management structure, target tactical activities to boost cash flows and prepare for Phase 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Launch major campaign in two parts supported by a series of tactical campaigns to drive customers into various product sectors of the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>Launch sector marketing plans and maintain seasonal campaigns aimed at boosting visitor numbers during periods of lower demand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MARKETING PLAN KEY FEATURES

A comprehensive Marketing Plan is proposed for the three years of the Strategic Plan including
1. Far greater attention to competition from other destinations and technology advances,
2. Top priority will be to facilitate the Riverland making much wider use of digital marketing both by the DMO and individual businesses,
3. Modernise the region’s destination websites as important selling tools,
4. Tourism businesses to be assisted to embrace modern merchandising and yield management methods so as to make their products more appealing to markets and distribution channels.
5. Raise awareness of regional features through the towns and villages clusters concept,
6. Development of targeted, integrated campaigns with measurable outcomes in partnership with industry stakeholders and industry organisations outside the region,
7. New approach to tactical marketing which will be business driven e.g. boosting demand for low seasons
8. Development of market development plans e.g seniors, romance, young adults, conferences
9. Development of sector marketing plans e.g. houseboats, attractions, food and wine, etc
10. Restructure market communication methods for the DMO and businesses to make greater use of modern digital era methods not just traditional advertising and promotion
11. Retention of a PR/publicity consultancy to maximise publicity for the region’s marketing,
12. Work more closely with other Visitor Industry partners in the region for mutual benefit.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

FUNDING THE PLAN

This is a plan to rejuvenate the Riverland tourism industry and Visitor Economy after suffering a revenue loss of over $200 million since 2000 and still dropping $41 million pa. It is a serious plan, produced by a professional, designed to quickly boost industry incomes in the short term and lead to industry sustainability in the long term. It is not a frivolous short term tactical plan.

Funding of this plan is designed to help the private sector recover and carry far more of the financial burden for destination marketing in the long term as industry incomes increase. It is more of a “helping hand”, not a reliance on taxpayer welfare.

This plan is based on funding from these sources

- A grant of $4,201,400 needed over three years from the Riverland Futures Fund,
- Riverland Councils continuing to fund destination marketing operations as they do now preferably with greater assistance for marketing initiatives over the three years of the plan,
- Industry support. In view of the serious economic plight of the industry currently, this plan is based on calls on the industry to be kept to a minimum. Year 1 is to help improve profitability but for the industry to increase its financial support in Year 2 and be far more supportive in Year 3. The private sector has not been supporting destination marketing under public sector management because such plans had no commercial potential. This will change under private sector management because destination marketing plans will target business,
- Operating profits for Destination Marketing Organisation budgets to improve from better serving the industry in terms of collecting commissions, transaction fees, reimbursement of operating costs within some campaign budgets, improving the profitability of the Visitor Information Centres (both franchised and operated by the Destination Marketing Organisation) after Councils transfer their operations (with Council operating budgets) to Destination Riverland,
- Other sources. Successful destination marketing organisations elsewhere, under private sector management, are able to use their business skills and peer pressure (not available to the public sector) to secure sponsorships, support in kind, negotiations with industry partners outside the region to bring funding and other resources to the table for integrated, targeted marketing campaigns, business propositions which attract funding contributions and other resources that can be accessed. Operating as a business unit, Destination Riverland will be able to engage in ventures that are beneficial for the region’s visitor industry like engaging in the website E-shop by selling online, local products and artworks for a commission.

The fundamental problem with public sector management of the industry is that the public sector only thinks in terms of spending money whereas under private sector management as a business unit, Destination Riverland will be thinking about making money. This psyche always opens up better management of funds and a constant focus on capturing business opportunities

Funding sought

Grants from the Riverland Futures Fund for this 3 year plan is $4,201,400 sought as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>395,640</td>
<td>289,260</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New staff (A)</td>
<td>787,500</td>
<td>1,050,000</td>
<td>1,050,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interim Manager (B)</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interim overheads (B)</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative costs</td>
<td>53,000</td>
<td>53,000</td>
<td>53,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating costs</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital fit-out</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>$1,346,140</td>
<td>$1,422,260</td>
<td>$1,433,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other funding sought is as follows

Advance Tourism
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

- Riverland Councils continue their destination marketing contribution of $33,000 pa minimum,
- Transfer of Visitor Information Centres to Destination Riverland along with the current budget allocations of each Council for this function,
- Destination Riverland membership fees, contributions to marketing campaigns, contributions from industry development activities, revenues earned from booking system transaction fees, contributions from industry partners for integrated, targeted, cooperative marketing campaigns designed to write business for the industry (not cooperative advertising campaigns as produced by SATC), sponsorships and other sources that an experienced new management team would tap into for funding support which are not possible presently.

RECOMMENDATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Aims of the plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>Quickly restore economic health of Riverland tourism industry in the short term to benefit cash flows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>Achieve industry sustainability in the long term by 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c)</td>
<td>Design any strategies to work in partnership with visitor industry businesses to help deliver a strong, growing, competitive and more prosperous private sector for the region.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th>Tourism is a commercial industry not a government department.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All strategies to be business driven with the commercial needs of the industry uppermost.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>New tourism organisation, Destination Riverland, to be formed as a Destination Marketing Organisation operating as a business unit.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This organisation to focus on destination marketing strategies designed to grow visitation to the region, increased revenues for visitor industry businesses and to contribute to the region’s Visitor Economy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Product development and infrastructure issues to remain with the public sector.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>Destination Riverland to be entirely an independent private sector managed organisation with a Tourism Board of industry stakeholders and a management team with proven, experienced, private sector industry executives for the CEO, Sales Manager/Marketing Manager and IT Manager positions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>These three appointments to be recruited from outside SA from locations using 21st century digital marketing strategies which are not being used in SA presently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Destination Riverland will be accountable for all results achieved from public sector and industry funds used for destination marketing operations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>Destination Riverland to be more competitive using digital era marketing, focussing on market development, more responsive to market developments and cater more for the needs of the industry including programs that target business outcomes for the stakeholders.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Only by so doing can the industry become more prosperous.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>Working closely with Chambers of Commerce, food and wine, events organisers, golf, motor sports, manufacturers and others who will be an important part of rebuilding the Visitor Economy.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mutually beneficial joint programs to be developed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th>Selection of the CEO and two other managers is critical to the future success of the Riverland tourism industry and the Visitor Economy.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not only should they come from outside SA but commercially competitive salaries will be essential, not public sector rates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th>Funding to be sought from Riverland Futures Fund and other sources as outlined above.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruiting a new management team from outside SA will open up new funding sources not accessed under SA public sector management.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Towards 2015 and Beyond

Working with Riverland businesses to grow the visitor economy

Riverland Tourism Development Plan

Riverland visitor numbers have dropped 35.8% since 2000

leading to a

Loss of over $200 million in revenue for the
Riverland Visitor Economy since 2000

PART A

VISITOR INDUSTRY BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

Section A 1

RIVERLAND TOURISM IS IN CRISIS

- Visitor numbers 2010 down by 35.8% on 2000
- Revenue losses for Riverland tourism industry over 2009, 2010 and 2011 forecasts to exceed $110 million

CURRENT REVENUE LOSSES FOR THE INDUSTRY ARE OVER $41 MILLION PER ANNUM.

This is also hurting both the Visitor Economy and Riverland communities.

- Decline in visitors over recent years has accelerated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year ended</th>
<th>Vis ‘000</th>
<th>c.f. 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>DOWN 11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>DOWN 33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>DOWN 26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>DOWN 35.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current trading conditions for 2011 so far indicate a likely further serious decline.

- Decline in visitors has accelerated over recent years compared with 2000

Between 2000 and 2009, visitor levels to the Riverland fell by 26.8% and are still declining. Results for 2010 declined by a further 9% to -35.8%. Indications are that 2011 will be down further

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic overnight visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(`000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism Research Australia

- Decline in visitor nights also very serious compared with 2000

Not only have actual visitor numbers declined by 35.8% since 2000, but visitor nights have also declined by -37.9 %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic visitor nights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(`000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Domestic visitor night figures for cal. Year 2000 were not available from SATC. Using available figures since cal. Year 2003, a decline of -37.9% has occurred over the period 2003-2010. This equates with the number of visitors that have delivered -35.8% since 2000 and 24.7% since 2003.
IMPACT OF DROUGHT AND FLOODS ON RIVERLAND TOURISM
NOT THE ONLY CAUSE OF VISITOR FIGURES DECLINING

There can be no doubt that between 2000 and 2010, first the drought and its cutbacks in water allocations then the floods had a very serious impact on visitor levels for the tourism industry.

But this was accompanied by another major reason behind the decline in visitor numbers – the absence of any effort by the public sector managing tourism industry commercial operations to instigate counter-measures to combat the decline in visitors.

For the farming and wine industries, little could be done to save businesses from the dreadful affects of their crisis. But tourism was an entirely different situation. Had the industry been under private sector management two actions would have occurred to minimise visitor losses

- Publicity strategies would have been developed to dispel negative perceptions in key markets, and
- These strategies would have been supported with campaigns offering attractive packages, special offers and integrated campaigns with industry partners outside the region designed to boost demand for leisure travel to the region.

Adding to the problem is that since 2000, there have been no market demand strategies developed by the public sector to generate new visitor demand for the region. This has fuelled the negative attitudes of the markets and the media outside the region towards the Riverland.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT STUDY ON IMPACT OF DROUGHT ON MURRAY RIVER

In 2010, the Federal Government joined with the states of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia to conduct a study which had these overarching objectives designed to

- Capture current perceptions of past and potential visitors to the Murray River region, and the impact these perceptions have had (and may in the future) on visitation to the region,
- Capture relevant economic data (e.g. spend, changes in visitation, changes in visitation patterns) that can be used as input to the economic impact modelling.

While some information has been useful for sub-region planning, there are two serious limitations to this research

- The study focuses largely on state level considerations and not regional or sub-regional needs, and
- It does not address what action was taken by the three state tourism organisations to initiate strategies to protect the economic performance of businesses in the regions. In all three states, the state government tourism organisations were not pro-active with plans to protect the commercial performance of regions and sub-regions.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT STUDY

- In several parts of the report, it confirmed that the Mildura Wentworth region is popular with South Australians for leisure travel,
- Recent visitors, Past visitors and Potential Visitors were asked “To the best of your knowledge, how have the following experiences and attractions in Region 6 (Riverland) changed as a result of the drought?”
Perceived drought – Riverland

This group which was surveyed had never visited the region and unlikely to do so in the next five years. There were no similar results recorded for past visitors or potential visitors who have not ruled out visiting the region in the next five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ser</th>
<th>% responses</th>
<th>Has become better</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Has become worse</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Availability of paddle steamers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Availability of houseboats</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fishing opportunities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Opportunities for water sports</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Availability of places to swim in the river</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Availability of places to picnic/BBQ</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Availability of quality lawn bowls facilities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Availability of quality food and wine experiences</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Availability of quality golf courses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Opportunities for camping/hiking/cycling/mountain biking or other nature-based activities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Opportunities for sightseeing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Vitality of quality events and festivals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Attractiveness of rivers, lakes and framing landscapes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With Serials 1-5 and 13, columns 3 and 4 show a negative perception of the region while with Serials 6-12 show a more positive situation. However, as there was no pro-active destination marketing to attack these misconceptions, the Riverland region really suffered. Adverse publicity over recent summer months served to reinforce this negativity.

Other notes from the study applicable to whole Murray River region

There has been growing concern from tourism operators in the region that the real or perceived impacts of the drought on recreational opportunities have significantly reduced tourism in the area. In particular, the drought has impacted environmental conditions along the Murray River, with some regions experiencing greater impact than others. For instance

- Algae blooms were experienced along the Murray in New South Wales and Victoria, and less so towards South Australia, and
- Water flows and wetland degradation occurred throughout the Murray region.

The following impacts were identified through the survey and supplementary analysis

- Overnight visits to the Murray region declined by 2.19% per annum over the period 1999-2008 compared with average declines of 1.255 for comparator regions less affected by the drought. (Note: While these figures may apply to the whole Murray Region, the drop in visitors to the Riverland over this period was 33.9%),

- Around 20% of survey respondents who had visited the Murray Region indicated that the drought had impacted on their travel behaviour. As a result of the drought it is estimated that 9% of past visitors visited the Murray Region less often, 5% reduced their duration of stay, 5% reduced expenditure and 2% no longer visit,

- Around 125 of the survey target audience were people that had never visited the Murray and rejected the possibility of visiting the Murray region within the next 5 years.. Of these, 22%
indicated that the drought is one of the factors contributing to their lack of interest in visiting the Murray Region in the next 5 years.

Notwithstanding the drought-impacted conditions of the Murray River, most parts of the Murray River continue to function and most are still at or near capacity and continue to provide opportunities for recreation. There is currently a view that people have been avoiding the Murray region altogether because of their perceptions of how the drought has impacted the range of activities and offerings that can still be pursued. These perceptions may not be accurate, i.e. not reflecting the actual recreational opportunities along the river.

**Period of the drought**

For the purposes of this study, the “drought period” in the Murray Region was regarded as 1999-2008. What needs to be considered is that the problems of the drought did not cease after 2008 and were exacerbated further by the onset of floods which also had a negative attitude on demand levels. As an example while visitor numbers 2000-2008 fell by 33.9% for the period following 2009-2010, visitor levels fell further to 35.8%. Also indications are that they will fall again during 2011.

**DROUGHT AND FLOODS CERTAINLY HAD AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON RIVERLAND TOURISM**

**BUT RIVERLAND TOURISM FAILED TO RESPOND TO CHANGING TIMES.**

Public sector management initiated no counter-measures to combat declining Riverland visitor numbers

A loss of revenues of over $200 million for the Riverland tourism industry since 2000 is seen as unimportant by the public sector which has long chosen to manage industry destination marketing operations. Had industry operations been under experienced private sector management, the following actions would have been taken

1. the downward trend would have been detected early in the decade and remedial strategies introduced to reverse the slide, and

2. before the drought and later, the floods, had their great impact, counter-measures would have been mobilised. These would have included attacks unfavourable publicity and addressed any loss of demand.

But this did not happen because public service personnel have no skills and expertise in achieving competitive commercial outcomes for the tourism industry. Their expertise is limited to advertising and promotion, not modern, sophisticated competitive destination marketing.

**TOURISM IS A VERY COMPETITIVE COMMERCIAL INDUSTRY BUT RIVERLAND IS FAR FROM BEING COMPETITIVE.**

Key factors that have adversely impacted on Riverland visitor results include

- Riverland tourism destination marketing is managed as if it is a government department not on the basis of being a competitive commercial industry,
- There is no sense of the need to consider the competitive environment in any SA tourism destination marketing activities. The competitive position is a high priority in every commercial industry but not SA tourism. Not countering the tough competitive position is really hurting Riverland results,
- There have been no efforts made to modernise Riverland tourism industry operations and the industry continues to operate as if it is the 1990’s,
• During the whole period 2000-2011, no marketing strategies were launched to specifically counter the Riverland decline,
• Market awareness of the Riverland has sunk very low as a result of flawed destination marketing decisions by the public sector,
• The private sector managed Riverland Tourism Association has been restricted to low level tactical marketing because of policy directives from Adelaide and a serious lack of resources

While the tourism industry in regions world-wide has moved to embrace the opportunities offered by digital marketing this has not happened in the Riverland.

COMPETITIVE SITUATION – LACK OF ACTION

It is very hard for the Riverland tourism industry to be successful when the supporting destination marketing is not competitive. Serious deficiencies impacting on Riverland tourism results have been

Websites not competitive

Destination websites and websites for individual businesses throughout the Riverland are mostly information driven and need to be upgraded to competitive marketing levels which target growth of visitors and business for visitor industry enterprises.

Online booking systems not competitive

Introduction of online bookings at all levels has been patchy. SATC took steps in 2004 to introduce the ConnectSA program. Since 2004, technology for online bookings has advanced significantly and it is questionable that an Adelaide based central reservations system now meets industry needs. Access to a variety of systems and use of channel management systems has become the preferred option for many businesses,

New merchandising methods not embraced by Riverland tourism industry

There is now universal use of new merchandising methods made possible by the introduction of digital marketing. There has been a rapid rate of take-up by Riverland's competitors but not the Riverland tourism industry. This is due in part to the lack of recognition at all levels of the commercial importance of this new technology. SATC has been experimenting but Riverland is losing out while it does not have the technical skills and resources needed,

Need to adopt modern yield management methods

Introduction of digital marketing has caused a sea-change with marketing by Regional Tourism Organisations world-wide but not in SA. For the Riverland tourism industry, there is a need to not only become familiar with new merchandising methods but to match the competition by adopting modern yield management methods. There is very little use of these methods presently in Regional SA and almost none in the Riverland

Need to focus on capturing business from the fast growing impulse buying market

There has been an explosion in impulse buying of holidays both with overseas and Australian destinations. Riverland is getting none of this because its destination marketing strategies are not structured to do so. New merchandising methods and new approaches to yield management are both important aspects of this strategy but the need is to target more business from the many digital distribution channels. This can’t be done until the Riverland embraces introduction of appropriate reservations systems and other modern marketing practices.

Introduction of low cost airlines

The Riverland has relied on motoring short break visitors mainly from Adelaide. The introduction of low cost airlines offered the Adelaide market an exciting new holiday concept; flying interstate for short breaks at low cost. This caused a huge loss of visitors to SA regions and is a serious contributor to the downturn but there was no campaign launched to counter this important development. Riverland tourism was hard hit as falling visitor numbers attest.

Lack of market development initiatives

Every commercial organisation maintains a focus on tapping into new business by expanding demand from existing markets with targeted marketing and development of market demand initiatives to grow new demand. But not in South Australia. There have been no market demand
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

strategies for the Riverland even with such huge drops in visitor numbers, only a few short term tactical campaigns that were not part of any long term strategies.

**Lack of responses to market downturns**

Riverland tourism industry during recent years has been buffeted by different market downturns including the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), negative publicity about lower Murray River levels during the drought and water levels during the recent floods. If Woolworths, Bunnings or other consumer driven commercial organisations had been hit, as they were during the GFC, they would have moved swiftly with specific marketing initiatives to maintain customer levels and cash flows. But nothing like this eventuated for the Riverland visitor industry.

**OTHER IMPORTANT SHORTCOMINGS BEING ADDRESSED BY THIS PLAN**

**Fragmentation with other sectors.**

Lack of better results have been occurring because of lack of closer links with other sectors of the Riverland Visitor Industry particularly food & wine, events, golf and motor sports.

There has been a shortage of skilled people to help the other sectors to also be more successful. This plan advocates importing a new management team with contemporary industry expertise and experience to work with each sector to achieve more effective tailored marketing programs and other commercial cooperation. From this, there will be mutual benefit for the sectors concerned, the tourism industry and the Riverland community.

**Support for smaller locations and retail sector lacking**

Sectors with good potential that have been overlooked for support in the past include

- Small locations are too often overlooked like Kingston-On-Murray, Cobdogla, Monash, Pike River and other locations. This plan aims to introduce two categories of locations, towns and villages. Each to have supporting marketing, and

- The retail sector and local products. Links with Chambers of Commerce to be established with regard to building up visitor demand for retailers including adding an E-Shop to the new destination website to give Riverland products world wide exposure as well as to develop a nightlife program to benefit restaurants.

All of these sectors are important to the success of the tourism industry but have not been assisted in the past with initiatives to help them to boost visitor spend in such a way that both the economies of each sector and the Riverland benefit.

**SKILLED LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT – KEY TO SUCCESS**

No organisation can succeed and grow without strong, competent, results oriented leadership and management. This applies equally to political parties, governments, sporting organisations, exporters and every other commercial operations including tourism at all levels.

Tourism is a commercial industry and its destination marketing organisations need to have experienced Boards and very competent management teams. Their qualities need to include

- A vision for the future of the organisation and its constituent parts,
- Being driven by business growth with its flow on benefits for local economies,
- Being results oriented which means development of new potential, capturing business opportunities and reacting to market developments,
- Being cognisant of the need to be competitive at all times including embracing technology advances,
- Being able to motivate staff, associates in the industry important to the organisation’s performance and customers who buy their products.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

There is no difference between the leadership and management standards required for Destination Riverland and other commercial organisations like News Ltd (SA), Sealink, Great Southern Railway, Coles, Woolworths or Bunnings.

The Riverland’s tourism industry operations are in difficulties because they have been managed far too long by the public and political system and not by proven industry commercial managements.

For the region to be rejuvenated, it needs competitive standard private sector leadership and management. This standard of leadership and management has not been provided for the Riverland tourism industry over the last 20 years which is a major reason why current results are so poor.

MAJOR INDUSTRY SHORTCOMING - LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT
The Riverland tourism industry is in a serious plight today because of the poor leadership and management which has existed throughout the last decade. The Riverland has lacked a private sector management team with competitive, commercial drive based on a vision, a strategic approach and strong industry leadership which includes

- Helping industry stakeholders to become more prosperous, and
- Being able to react swiftly with appropriate measures to combat changing market circumstances

Instead, the Riverland’s destination marketing and industry development has been managed by the public sector as if it is a government department. The public sector sees no responsibility for them with coping with the commercial needs of the industry.

Worst of all, their has been no leadership shown either with initiatives to

- Cope with changing market circumstances, some developments being very serious,
- Nor has there been any attempt made to keep the industry competitive by introducing digital era marketing, modern merchandising and such practices as modern yield management methods, and
- Last but not least, there has been no recruitment of industry professionals for key destination marketing functions. THIS HAS RESULTED IN THE RIVERLAND REGION THINKING THEY ARE OPERATING AT BEST PRACTICE LEVELS WHEN THE REGION’S TOURISM INDUSTRY IS ACTUALLY USING PRACTICES THAT ARE 10-15 YEARS OUT OF DATE. It is amazing how many connected with the Riverland tourism industry wrongly believe the region is operating at a very high standard.

VERY SERIOUS IS THE LACK OF RECRUITMENT OF TOURISM INDUSTRY EXECUTIVES WHO OFFER CONTEMPORARY EXPERIENCE IN TOURISM INDUSTRY DIGITAL ERA DESTINATION MARKETING OPERATIONS. AS A RESULT, FOR MANY YEARS, TOURISM INDUSTRY MANAGEMENT POSITIONS ACROSS SOUTH AUSTRALIA, THE RIVERLAND ESPECIALLY, HAVE BEEN FILLED WITH PUBLIC SECTOR PERSONNEL. FALLING VISITOR RESULTS HAVE BEEN THE RESULT.

The Riverland has recognised the importance of this situation and is moving to create an independent private sector Tourism Board and management team. Because the Riverland is 15 years behind modern standards, it is vital that an imported management team be appointed from outside South Australia with the necessary skills to deliver reforms. Without these specialist skills, no significant long term improvement can be achieved which is needed to guarantee long term success of the region.
LOCAL ATTITUDES LIMITING BETTER RESULTS

The whole of South Australia’s tourism industry suffers from a state policy of protecting SA jobs for SA people which has led to an introverted culture. Tourism is an export industry. Riverland’s customers live mainly in Adelaide and to a lesser extent in other states but there is very little awareness of the tourism business environment in distant markets important to the region. Port Lincoln tuna fisherman stay aware of developments in their major markets overseas. Likewise Limestone Coast crayfish fishermen are well informed about their Asian markets and SA farmers would be very aware of what is happening in their key markets around the world.

But not the Riverland tourism industry. Tourism industry stakeholders in the Riverland are far more concerned about local issues while there is very little knowledge of the real reasons behind the current visitor downturn. Because of poor leadership and management over the years, there is far too much attention paid to local and product issues and not the important issues which are making it easier now for customers in distant markets to choose to go to other destinations.

Riverland tourism businesses rarely talk about why customers in distant markets are not choosing to visit the Riverland preferring to go elsewhere instead. There is a tendency to look for local excuses for the downturn rather than examine the competitive environment the region faces in key markets. A “business as usual” focus prevails rather than pursuing innovative, exciting, new destination marketing initiatives.

This problem will not be solved until SA’s parochial thinking is replaced with a better understanding, like other SA industries, of the business environment in distant markets they rely on for customers. It is time for the Riverland to stop looking inward and pay greater attention by looking outward with market driven philosophies.

RIVERLAND TOURISM TRENDS ARE VERY SERIOUS

The diagram on the next page shows how Riverland’s competitors have been trending (green line) in terms of their competitiveness with the region.

The other lines show a 1% growth pa by Riverland (red) and actual results trend line (black line). Using this formula, in 2009, there was a $26 million deficit, 2010 was worse with a $41 million deficit and 2011 is expected to be worse again.

What the diagram illustrates is the huge gap which has grown worse over the years because there has been no response with counter-measures for changing market forces, the drought and the floods.

JUST THROWING TAXPAYER FUNDS AT SHORT TERM TACTICAL INITIATIVES WILL NOT DELIVER SUSTAINABLE MARKET GROWTH NOR PROVIDE THE LONG TERM RESTRUCTURING NEEDED TO REJUVENATE THE RIVERLAND TOURISM INDUSTRY.

A view has prevailed under public sector management that short term tactical marketing initiatives will stimulate new demand. The Re-charge campaign for Murray River houseboats did lift short term demand but the long term residual benefit has not occurred because of a lack of supportive ongoing strategies. Successful commercial organisations all know that success only comes when tactical campaigns are part of a wider strategy for growth. It is only the SA public sector which is unaware of this important commercial fact.
RIVERLAND TOURISM INDUSTRY
Past economic performance

Riverland’s competitors now operating at this level and their results and professionalism continue to grow

Results 2000-2009 with 1% growth pa

Actual results 2000-2009

Actual results 2000-2009

$26 Mill

$41 Mill
NEED TO MODERNISE MARKETING OPERATIONS COMPLETELY IGNORED BY THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Since 2000, while other private sector commercial industries across South Australia have been modernising their operations to improve their performance, this has been completely ignored by the SA public sector which chooses to manage industry operations. Even Councils have revolutionised their municipal operations with electronic payment of rates and other charges, computerisation of all operations, use of websites to improve communication with residents, wheely bins for garbage and Council CEOs using iPads to improve their personal efficiency.

Prevalent through the community are such wonderful advances as

- Newspapers changing from compositors to journalists writing their articles on a computer ready to print with submission by email from wherever they may be using WIFI technology,
- Bar codes have been introduced to speed up processing at supermarket check-out counters and management of warehouse stocks,
- Portable data terminals (PDTs) which are hand held scanners. DHL Express, like many others, uses this technology to give drivers instructions about delivery pick-ups which are then tracked throughout their system and then for delivery where customers sign for receipt
- The medical fraternity are moving towards a national grid that allows GPs to not only store patient records but make information available to surgeons, collect data from chemists and a lot more
- Online purchase is now a standard function for many in the community whether it be insurance, E-bay, theatre tickets, buying shares, subscription renewals, payment of rates and many other services. Book shops and others have closed recently because of escalation of online buying by customers
- Advertising budgets for traditional advertising are being slashed and these funds are being more and more directed into digital marketing across many industries including tourism
- Merchandising is now widespread because consumers are reacting positively to these new methods

and the list goes on and on.

But not SA tourism regions including the Riverland, they are inextricably linked with 1990s methods and they wonder why visitor numbers are in decline

NO EMBRACE OF THE DIGITAL ERA

A serious problem facing the Riverland tourism industry is the lack of skills and expertise within the industry with destination marketing that is exploiting the opportunities offered by the digital era.

SATC has made a modest effort to base their operations on digital technology but there has been nothing done to make regions competitive with this technology. Very serious is the lack of recognition by both the public and private sectors in the region about the serious state of this situation which is a major cause behind declining visitor numbers.

TOURISM SKILLS NOT PROGRESSIONED

The continued use of 1990s policies for regional tourism operations has meant there has been NO PROGRESSIVE ADVANCES IN DEVELOPING SKILLS AND EXPERTISE AT ANY LEVEL IN SA TO MATCH THE ADVANCE OF DIGITAL ERA MARKETING AND NEW MODERN MARKETING METHODS NOW BEING EMPLOYED BY SOUTH AUSTRALIA’S COMPETITION. THERE ARE SOME IN THE RIVERLAND TOURISM INDUSTRY WHO FEEL THAT RIVERLAND TOURISM OPERATIONS ARE PERFORMING AT A HIGH LEVEL. THEY ARE YET TO REALISE THAT THE RIVERLAND IS NO LONGER COMPETITIVE IN DISTANT MARKETS.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

PYSCHE OF THE INDUSTRY

Across the Riverland tourism industry there is a heavy bias towards political and local issues with the commercial drive having been weakened by being subjected to policies and practices of the public sector. Private sector tourism operations are driven by leadership and managements that have a strong commercial focus and a determination to be innovative. This spirit has been driven out of regional tourism because of excessive influence of the public sector.

It is essential that this drive and innovation be restored if tourism is to grow again. The public sector has demonstrated that it does not have these skills. By bringing into the Riverland dynamic industry leaders for the new tourism organisation, The return of a positive spirited psyche can be achieved.

It is essential that any new management for Destination Riverland be found from successful destinations outside the state. Any suggestion that local or SA industry people be recruited can only continue the present level of operations, they will not have the technical expertise required. They are also likely to be too committed to the outdated SA tourism industry culture which prevails.

MAJOR MANAGEMENT REFORM
VITAL FOR SUCCESS OF THIS PLAN

Public sector management of Riverland region has been unsuccessful.

Experienced, proven private sector key appointments are needed.

It is vital industry executives recruited bring proven modern expertise.

Tourism is a commercial industry and a major cause of the depressed visitor numbers flows directly from the public service appointing public service management personnel who have no private sector competitive, commercial tourism industry backgrounds. This lack of previous first hand experience in the industry at the destination marketing level has been a major contributing factor behind the 35.8% drop in visitor numbers since 2000. No understanding has been demonstrated of the commercial needs of private sector industry businesses. Nor do they have the industry expertise or knowledge needed for programs to stimulate demand and counter downturns.

The whole structure of this plan is built around a basic commercial practice which is to import proven competent, experienced tourism industry commercial executives from successful tourism organisations interstate to management positions. The imported management team will need to spend the next three years

- Using their first hand industry experience to put in place the commercial operations that should have been progressively introduced between 2000 and 2010, and
- Coaching the region’s tourism industry to become better skilled in merchandising, yield management, tourism marketing, digital marketing and other modern marketing and business methods so that a pool of experience is developed to ensure the industry is well managed for the next decade.

Advance Tourism
SUCCESSFUL TOURISM INDUSTRY STRUCTURES AROUND THE WORLD

In the mid-20th century, tourism was a new industry for Australia. Like other commercial industries, the public sector facilitated its development but as the industry started to mature, State Governments, except Queensland, took it upon themselves to control and manage industry operations rather than follow the usual practice of fostering progressive development of private sector management. South Australia was no exception.

In 2000, like all other commercial industries, tourism faced a new era of change forced on to it by
- Arrival of the digital era,
- Explosion with online purchases across the community, not just airlines,
- Introduction of digital marketing which has been dramatically replacing traditional advertising and other promotional methods,
- Impact of substantial changes in the airline industry around the world and in Australia,
- Rapid expansion of ship cruises in the South Pacific and around the world.

However, while there were substantial changes in industry operations since 2000, State Governments continue to manage the tourism industry using the same methods as 20-30 years ago. There has been no modernisation of the SA regional tourism industry especially the Riverland. As a result the tourism industry has not remained competitive and results have been in decline.

STANDARD NORMAL PUBLIC/PRIVATE SECTOR DIVISIONS WORLD-WIDE

For decades the public sector has respected that it has a role to facilitate development of the motor vehicle industry, tuna fishing, crayfishing industry, wine industry, farming and many others. These industries have long been provided with government support of different kinds at taxpayer expense but never do State or Local Governments feel they must impose their influence on the operations of these industries after providing funding support.

But with tourism, unlike other industries, a culture has been fostered that because public monies are involved, state and local governments need to be directly involved in managing a complex commercial operations of the industry which they are not skilled to do. This differs from standard world-wide practice which is illustrated as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public sector</th>
<th>Private sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main role – product and infrastructure supply</td>
<td>Individual tourism businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like other industries, public sector provides</td>
<td>These are the main vehicles to collect the revenues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Product development assistance</td>
<td>which flow into the local economy. Each business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provision of infrastructure</td>
<td>operates independently and has to remain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Investor support</td>
<td>profitable to be viable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also provides funding support for destination</td>
<td>This calls for special business skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marketing</td>
<td><strong>Destination marketing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This function is performed by State/Province and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional Tourism Organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Destination marketing calls for very different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>commercial skills to managing tourism businesses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is very little recognition in regional South Australia that destination marketing calls for skills and expertise that understands the competitive situation in distant markets and knows how to work with industry partners outside the region to develop new market demand, access into business opportunities and to counter business (visitors) currently being lost.

Advance Tourism 25
TOURISM INDUSTRY OPERATES ON TWO LEVELS

Across South Australia there is little awareness that successful tourism destinations operate on two levels like other industries. Examples are as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal</th>
<th>Solicitors</th>
<th>Barristers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>General Practitioners</td>
<td>Surgeons/Physicians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big businesses</td>
<td>Line managers</td>
<td>Corporate executives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>Individual businesses</td>
<td>Destination marketers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With tourism, the two levels each need particular business skills as follows

- **Individual businesses** develop business operating skills to deliver profitable business results. Marketing needs of individual businesses are based on attracting customers to their business. While they contribute to destination marketing they rely on the Destination Marketing Organisation to develop demand for the destination from distant markets, and

- **Destination Marketing Organisations** initiate marketing programs to capture visitor growth (business) for the destination from various markets using different marketing methods and various strategies in conjunction with industry partners and third party distribution channels. Managing destination marketing calls for entirely different marketing skills to operating individual tourism businesses.

PUBLIC PRIVATE SECTOR DIFFERENCES

The public sector sees the roles and salaries of senior management appointments differently to the private sector as summarised below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public sector</th>
<th>Private sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior managers are appointed in accordance with the following criteria</td>
<td>Senior managers are appointed in accordance with their commercial expertise, leadership and management skills. Are expected to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Able to provide the government of the day with sound reliable advice,</td>
<td>• Manage the Organisation’s commercial operations in accordance with Board policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Will ensure that there are no political repercussions for the government</td>
<td>• Make quick business decisions being prepared to take business risks where necessary,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are capable of making sound, safe decisions,</td>
<td>• Be able to set commercial directions, anticipate developments and react accordingly,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Paid in accordance with government gradings system and set salary scales. No recognition of commercial value of the appointment,</td>
<td>• Able to quickly react to capture business opportunities or counter competitor activities,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When appointed to tourism positions, there is no need to have prior experience in tourism industry commercial operations</td>
<td>• Develop staff for career progression.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| No accountability for outcomes for tourism industry private sector and the visitor economy of the state | Held accountable for performance of business operations and measurable outcomes |

In the Riverland, because the industry has been under close public sector control, there has been little opportunity to unleash modern private sector driven destination marketing practices or develop strategies to build the expertise needed for successful industry development.
ROLES OF DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANISATIONS ARE DIFFERENT

There is a big difference between the roles of a State Tourism Organisation and a Regional Tourism Organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Tourism Organisation</th>
<th>Regional Tourism Organisations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Australian Tourism Commission</td>
<td>Around the world, Regional Tourism Organisations are usually decentralised, independent, private sector managed destination marketing organisations. Most operate as a business unit for their industry stakeholders with funding support from their State Tourism Organisation and local government.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other countries, State/Province Tourism Organisations are usually operated as independent tourism organisations under private sector control but responsible to the State or Province Government.

South Australia is in the minority choosing to manage the State Tourism Organisation as part of the public service.

The role of SATC is to promote SA and to attract visitors to the state. It has no responsibility for helping to build a strong private sector commercial performance.

SATC has been controlling all destination marketing operations throughout the state through the taxpayer funded resources that have been provided.

From 1st July 2011, these taxpayer funded resources will not be available in regions thereby creating a new operating environment.

RTOs worldwide have two main roles,
(1) Targeting visitors to come to the destination as customers of tourism and other businesses, and
(2) Assisting local tourism businesses to grow and be prosperous.

It is also the practice of successful RTOs around the world to recruit skilled private sector destination marketers for management positions. But this has not been happening in SA. There are many fine people in SA regions but they have only worked in one tourism industry, South Australia.

Across the whole state, there has been no recruitment of new people from interstate or NZ who would bring into the state, knowledge as to how the tourism industry operates in competitive areas outside SA.

NEW REGIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION TO OPERATE AS A BUSINESS UNIT

A major policy change with this proposal is that Destination Riverland, the new Regional Tourism Organisation is to operate as a business unit in accordance with modern destination marketing organisation practices.

The major benefits this will bring are

1. **Performance and marketing objectives to be set** on a period, annual and long term basis to guide development of the performance of the organisation and the industry overall. No such quantifiable objectives are in place presently,

2. All business and marketing activities to have measurable outcomes so that **accountability can be introduced** for reporting to industry stakeholders and funding agencies. Reports to be published on major campaigns including results achieved,

3. **Greater productivity** to come from public and private sector funds invested in destination marketing because the RTO would be entering into integrated, targeted marketing campaigns with industry both within the region and outside the region. This will mean pooling of cash and kind resources for greater market reach and mutual benefit,

4. **All marketing to be based on commercial considerations** not political outcomes,

5. Wherever practical, **industry stakeholders to be involved in the planning and/or execution** of major activities like consumer shows.
PLAN OUTCOMES

In view of the serious crisis currently facing the Riverland tourism industry where results are still deteriorating, this plan provides for these outcomes:

1. As fast as possible provide a boost to the cash flows of tourism and visitor industry businesses by stimulating demand in the short term,

2. Concurrent with this, expedite the introduction of digital marketing resources for the RTO and for individual businesses

3. In Phase Two (2012/13) launch a major campaign using the new digital marketing facilities and other resources to maximise market impact. Sector marketing plans also to proceed independently

4. Work with other sectors of the Visitor Industry to achieve more effective marketing programs. This would benefit food & wine, events, golf, motor sports and others

5. Develop the organisation’s management and marketing function functions so that the new arrangements can deliver long term sustainability for the Regional Tourism Organisation and the Riverland tourism industry.

It needs to be recognised that there are no long term management strategies in South Australia. The whole tourism industry operates using government based on a short term approach rather than long term commercial planning.
RIVERLAND FUTURES FUND
Tourism Investment Objectives

It is hard to see the Riverland Futures Fund 20 year Investment Objectives for Tourism being achieved without major reforms and realistic funding support for a strategic plan restructure industry operations which are designed to repair the serious damage caused by Riverland visitor numbers falling 35.8% since 2000.

In February 2010, the Riverland Sustainable Futures Fund (RSFF) was announced to facilitate the region’s economic recovery by encouraging further investment in existing businesses, and assisting the region to diversify its economic base.

RSFF is a $20 million fund available over 4 years and is accessible by organisations and businesses to fund projects that “improve infrastructure, support industry attraction and help grow existing businesses”.

PURPOSE OF THE FUND
It is expected that over time, the RSFF will deliver structural change, popular growth and employment outcomes to the Riverland, by supporting viable projects that:
Assist to diversify the economic base of the Riverland, or build on the existing competitive advantages of the Riverland
1. Create sustainable new employment opportunities,
2. Increase the region’s living standards
3. Sustain or increase population.
4. Ensure the key enablers of the economy are in place, eg, economic and social infrastructure,
5. Build additional competitiveness and social capacity,
6. Increase local, national and international investment in the region

This project is structured to meet the criteria above.

Futures fund objectives
The 20 year Investment Objectives promulgated by the Riverland Futures Taskforce list these Investment Attraction Objectives and Performance Indicators for tourism are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2026</th>
<th>2031</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional visitor nights³</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>1,005</td>
<td>1,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment $m additional</td>
<td>$26m</td>
<td>$43m</td>
<td>$85m</td>
<td>$128m</td>
<td>$171m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It will be nearly impossible to achieve these objectives if present management and destination marketing practices continue. Spending small sums on low level tactical promotional activities

³ All investment objectives are expressed in 2010 dollars
and staying with old fashioned practices, has clearly failed to make very little difference for the reasons shown below.

**NO EFFECTIVE DESTINATION MARKETING OVER THE LAST DECADE**

Visitor numbers and visitor nights in 2009 and 2010 were down significantly and continuing to trend down in 2011.

The simple cause of this problem is that THERE HAS BEEN NO EFFECTIVE DESTINATION MARKETING FOR AT LEAST THE PAST FIVE YEARS. As a result, the destination today has no “top of mind awareness” in key markets which is why visitor volumes are in severe decline.

There have been no initiatives by the public sector managing the region’s tourism industry to launch any counter-measures to combat declining visitor numbers. THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAS BEEN UNABLE TO INITIATE ANY INDEPENDENT DESTINATION MARKETING AS THE INDUSTRY HAS BEEN UNDER TIGHT PUBLIC SECTOR CONTROL FROM ADELAIDE

There have been a few promotional activities of a 1990s standard which are no longer competitive in the digital era.

Digital marketing, this modern, exciting new technology for marketing is yet to be embraced by SA regions and the industry.

Very concerning is a prevalent view in SA which feels that effective destination marketing can be fixed with a small funding allocation. That is just wishful thinking. The industry is in crisis after 15 years of neglect with destination marketing standards far short of the competition. Advertising and promotion which is the current thinking is no longer adequate.

The Riverland tourism industry cannot, repeat cannot, fix this deficiency with stop gap measures and wishful thinking. If appropriate funding cannot be found, small allocations of taxpayer funds will be of very little value to combat the drop in demand of 35.8%.

**SHORT TERM TACTICAL INITIATIVES WILL NOT BE SUCCESSFUL**

For over a decade, the region has suffered
- A 35.8 % drop in visitors,
- Revenue losses of over $200 million and currently running at $41 million per annum,
- Skills and expertise to launch modern competitive driven marketing strategies have largely been lost to the region,
- The region is far from competitive with 2011 destination marketing strategies widely in use outside SA,
- Relationships between tourism and other sectors of the visitor economy are far from adequate, and
- **MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, existing staff do not have the skills and expertise to deliver strategies that will rejuvenate the industry is such a way that it can become self-sustaining within 3-4 years.**

**Short term tactical initiatives have been proposed as a means of restoring the industry to economic health**

All this will do is spend taxpayer monies for short term gain and within 3-4 years, the Riverland will be back where it is today. A good example of this was a 2008 Recharge campaign for houseboats on the Murray River. At the time, it attracted an upsurge in bookings but it had no lasting value as recent results show.
It is important that experienced industry people be brought into the Riverland and given the resources to work with the industry with the aim of installing the managerial and marketing skills to deliver successful strategic programs which will be the basis for future demand growth. With a private sector Tourism Board free of public sector influence, the commercial aspirations of the private sector can be significantly aided with help by proven experts who will provide a sound future for the industry.

Recruiting South Australians to the new Destination Riverland management function who have been part of the state’s tourism culture of the last 30-40 years will be pointless.

THE RIGHT PEOPLE NEEDED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

This plan is based on the normal commercial industry attitude that it is the people, the right people, who will make this plan work. It is based on importing experienced executives who know how a modern tourism industry operates and can manage the whole process expeditiously and efficiently.

The people to be recruited need to show good leadership and management skills as well as good business acumen and be held accountable for results being achieved.

It is vital that the usual public sector practice of offering public service pay scales be set aside. The new Board of Destination Riverland will need to be able to offer appealing salary packages appropriate to the commercial task ahead.

IT SHOULD NOT BE OVER-LOOKED THAT THE RIVERELAND TOURISM INDUSTRY OVER THE LAST DECADE HAS LOST OVER $200 MILLION IN REVENUES WHILE THE INDUSTRY HAS BEEN MANAGED BY PEOPLE ON PUBLIC SECTOR PAY SCALES, NOT COMMERCIAL LEVEL SALARIES NORMALLY FOUND IN COMMERCIAL INDUSTRIES.

IF THE RIGHT PEOPLE ARE NOT RECRUITED

If the management team which is recruited does not come with

- Good leadership and management skills,
- A proven background in 21st century digital marketing skills and expertise,
- A sound knowledge as to how be successful in the competitive environment,
- Previous commercial experience in tourism competitive marketing strategies and
- An entrepreneurial approach to help rejuvenate the industry with market development initiatives and business development strategies to counter the downturn,

little progress can be made.

To rely a new management team drawn from long serving tourism industry appointments in the bureaucratically driven SA tourism industry will only result in taxpayer and industry funds being used to continue “more of the same”. Present practices have failed to demonstrate any competitive initiatives for industry development over the last 20 years

Throwing taxpayer funds at a “rag bag” of uncoordinated ideas just to appear to be doing something will neither help the industry to raise its marketing performance to 21st century competitive standards nor deliver a strong, growing, competitive, prosperous and sustainable Riverland tourism industry well into the future.

This plan is titled “Towards 2015 and Beyond” because it is a strategic plan not just to boost demand in the short term but to restructure industry operations for the long term. This will be difficult to achieve without proven, experienced executives with a private sector background.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

Section A 4

AIM OF THE PLAN

Over the last decade, visitor numbers have fallen 35.8%. This has led to a loss of revenue of over $200 million. Over the last three years, revenues have been down to $108 million

At no time have there been any counter-measures to reverse the decline. As a result this has led to many businesses laying off staff, houseboats not moving, some business owners getting second jobs to survive, and under-utilisation of tourism assets throughout the region.

PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN TOURISM DOWN TO ZERO

The level of private sector investment in tourism businesses is virtually down to zero.

Banks and other sources for investments capital have confirmed they are not making capital available for tourism investments in the Riverland currently. Many existing businesses want to sell but cannot because potential buyers can’t borrow capital needed to buy the business. One leading tourism business in the Riverland has the financial capacity to borrow for upgrading their operation but will not do so in a climate of falling visitor numbers because of debt servicing needs.

NO QUICK FIX FOR THE STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

The Riverland tourism industry’s economic situation is in such a poor state in terms of

- Depressed visitor volumes which continue to fall,
- Out-of-date operating and marketing methods, and
- Low levels of market awareness. “Throwing money” at short term tactical initiatives and advertising have not worked in the past and will just not work now.

No-one should think there is a short cut to repairing the damage caused by a decade of poor destination marketing and a complete lack of industry development.

AIM OF THIS PLAN

Aim of this plan is to restore the economic health of the Riverland visitor industry in the short term and put the industry on a long term sustainable basis

The three main aspects of this aim are to

(1) To boost demand quickly to improve cash flows of tourism and other businesses,
(2) To import experienced private sector tourism executives experienced in competitive destination marketing and modern digital era marketing methods, so as to achieve ongoing sustainability by 2015
(3) To adopt strategic and tactical marketing over three years to restore growth back to 2000 levels

The importance of these three parts of the aim should not be under-stated particularly the need to import skilled executives for the management team who will need to come from outside South Australia.

THIS PLAN WILL TAKE THREE YEARS TO EXECUTE SUCCESSFULLY IF THERE IS TO BE LONG TERM BENEFIT FOR THE BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITY OF THE REGION.
FACTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

The facts

- In 2009, visitor volumes were down 20.9% on 2000. In 2010, visitor volumes for the year fell to 35.8%, a further 14.9%. For 2011, anecdotal reports indicate that a worse situation will apply.

- In numerical terms, visitor numbers have fallen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Vis ’000</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>276</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>Down 20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>Down 35.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism Research Australia

VISITOR SPEND ESTIMATED TO BE DOWN $108 MILLION 2009 – 2010 - 2011
TOURISM BUSINESSES ARE REALLY SUFFERING

In 1996, Tourism Research Australia reported that spending by visitors in the Riverland in 2009 was estimated at $96 million and that was after a fall of 20.9% in visitor numbers

In 2009, had Riverland visitor numbers been at 2000 levels plus 1% for growth this would have given the Riverland an extra $26 million in visitor revenues

In 2010, Riverland visitors fell a further 14.9% to 35.8%. Assuming visitor spending also fell by 14.9%, visitor revenues will have fallen to $41 million

In 2011, if Riverland visitor numbers remain at 2010 levels (actually being forecast to be worse) this will mean another loss of $41 million in revenues

IN TOTAL, OVER THREE YEARS, REVENUE LOST TO THE RIVERLAND VISITOR INDUSTRY EXCEEDS $108 MILLION

COMPROMISING NEEDED FUNDING WILL PREVENT PLAN FROM SUCCEEDING

If there is compromise which reduces funding for the plan this will not permit essential industry restructure which must be accompanied by coaching of industry businesses in modern marketing skills. One without the other will not be successful.

Shown on the next page is a diagram for the implementation of key recommendations and marketing initiatives of the plan

DRAFT PLAN PROGRAM DIAGRAM

The diagram on the next page shows the outline development of this plan over the first two years. Year 3 is not included as the planning for this year is to be built on

- Development of sector marketing campaigns, and

- The new management to plan the marketing for this year in the light of marketing experience in Years 1 and 2. Also there will be a greater reliance on the private sector being restored to a position where tourism businesses in Year 3 will be much better situated to buy into programs. This will be the way of the future for the RTO.
## Riverland Tourism Development Plan

### DESTINATION RIVERLAND

#### Plan Program Diagram

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SATC Regional Manager retained during interim</td>
<td>Management team in place</td>
<td>Houseboats brochure development</td>
<td>Houseboats campaign</td>
<td>Winter tactical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board formed</td>
<td>BEGIN INTRODUCING DIGITAL TOOLS AND DIGITAL MARKETING</td>
<td>DEVELOPMENT OF NEW DESTINATION WEBSITE AND HELP BUSINESS WEBSITES TO UPGRADE</td>
<td>101 holidays brochure development</td>
<td>Awareness tactical</td>
<td>Launch 101 brochure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PR CONSULTANT APPOINTED</td>
<td>Winter tactical</td>
<td>Cont Jul-Aug</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Year 1

**2011/2012**

- **Jul** - Aug: Winter tactical (cont)
- **Sep** - Oct: MAJOR CAMPAIGN
  - An integrated, targeted, cooperative campaign with industry partners within and outside region
  - Planning to begin January 2012
- **Nov** - Dec: Autumn tactical
- **Jan**: Winter tactical

### Year 2

**2012/2013**

- **Jul** - Aug: Winter tactical (cont)
- **Sep** - Oct: MAJOR CAMPAIGN
  - An integrated, targeted, cooperative campaign with industry partners within and outside region
  - Planning to begin January 2012
- **Nov** - Dec: Autumn tactical
- **Jan**: Winter tactical
- **Feb** - Mar: Awareness campaign will be continued using greater event promotion and PR activities

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**Awareness tactical, Autumn tactical, Winter tactical.**

These campaigns will focus on promoting reasons to visit the region, both towns and villages, with PR coverage plus offer attractive products that customers can buy. Achieving sales/bookings being the top priority.

**MAJOR CAMPAIGN**

This campaign will be designed to make a quantum lift in desire to visit the Riverland and to focus on offering a wide range of Riverland holiday options for customers to buy.

This campaign will make wide use of the new digital marketing tools which will be available within the region by Spring 2012. It will also use the modern destination marketing method of integrated, targeted, cooperative marketing that adds extra support to the budget and also has greater market reach. This is vastly different to the SATC approach which is nothing more than cooperative advertising at best.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

Unfolding events

Turning around an industry which has been deprived of any modern marketing support and proper strategic planning for so long will take time. Some of the campaigns will also need time to develop for the market because many tourism businesses will not be familiar with modern marketing practices and will have to be coached. Learning about 21st century marketing activities will take time for some.

Also the few Destination Riverland executives with specialist knowledge will have to deal with developing projects while handling current day developments at the same time. This demand on their time should not be under-estimated.

Experience elsewhere indicates that most tourism marketing campaigns take time to develop before being launched. Even the time frames shown may prove to be tight because of their complexity.

If candidates are appointed to key appointments with limited knowledge and expertise in modern marketing, there can be no doubt that the scheduled activities will certainly run late or fail.

The key events scheduled are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2011 Q3 | • Tourism Board formed  
• Recruitment of management team  
• Start assembling information for 101 Holiday Ideas brochure |
| 2011 Q4 | • Management team take up their appointments  
• Finalise 101 Holiday Ideas brochure and launch awareness campaign with product offers  
• Development of new destination website to begin (9 months program)  
• Begin introducing digital marketing tools as quickly as possible (6 months)  
• Begin preparation of Houseboats brochure  
• Coaching of tourism businesses about modern merchandising and yield management methods to begin |
| 2012 Q1 | • Launch houseboats campaign with emphasis on targeting business during the autumn months  
• Prepare for the Winter tactical campaign  
• Begin planning for Major Campaign in Q4 |
| 2012 Q2 | • Winter tactical campaign launch with attractive winter holiday offers for customers to buy  
• Awareness marketing activities continue |
| 2012 Q3 | • Winter tactical campaign launch with attractive winter holiday offers to continue  
• Awareness marketing activities continue |
| 2012 Q4 | • MAJOR CAMPAIGN. By this time all websites, digital marketing resources, modern merchandising and yield management coaching to be completed to allow for negotiations with industry partners outside the region to participate.  
• Aims of the major campaign are to give a substantial boost to market demand and to have products ready for impulse buyers to purchase through electronic means. Also to have some third party distribution channels selling Riverland products.  
• Planning for Autumn Tactical campaign with product offers to begin. |
## Riverland Tourism Development Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013 Q1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Autumn Tactical campaign to be launched</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Planning for Winter Tactical campaign with product offers to begin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sector campaigns to be developed and launched during calendar year 2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Awareness marketing activities continue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013 Q2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Winter Tactical campaign to be launched</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sector campaigns to be launched as appropriate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Awareness marketing activities continue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**THIS PLAN IS ABOUT**

RESTORING THE ECONOMIC HEALTH OF RIVERLAND TOURISM INDUSTRY ON A LONG TERM SUSTAINABLE BASIS

### Key elements of the plan

1. Destination Riverland to be an independent private sector managed Regional Tourism Organisation operating as a business unit accountable to stakeholders and funding agencies for results achieved

2. Focus on business outcomes not endless unsuccessful tactical activities promoting the destination. Modern approach is to target business while still promoting the destination,

3. Public sector government administrative and promotional approach to be replaced with business driven approach to boost the visitor economy,

4. Top priority will be to make use of private sector business, entrepreneurial and innovative skills to develop new demand by tapping into a variety of industry partners within the region and located in target markets. Greater availability of Riverland product to be made to third party distribution channels

5. Recruiting proven, experienced industry talent from outside SA to manage the plan and work with the Riverland tourism industry to raise the business performances of the industry. Not to recruit candidates with extensive competitive commercial experience will be detrimental to the plan and the future economic success of the visitor industry,

6. Proper strategic planning with measured outcomes to be standard procedure,

7. Introduction of modern digital marketing, destination website to target more customers for the industry and other modern marketing tools will be essential,

8. Programs for sector development including strategies to provide a higher profile for towns and smaller villages of the region to be a priority

9. Working closely with visitor industry partners to assist with developing programs for mutual benefit,

10. Using tourism to raise demand for locally produced Riverland products,

11. Building appeal and demand of the region with more effective PR publicity, and

12. **Most important,** produce the results which would lead to banks and investment capital funding sources once again making capital available for investment in tourism across the region
MEASURING PERFORMANCE OF THE PLAN

In all commercial industries like tourism, the commercial performance is continually being measured with a variety of performance results. For example, News Ltd operations are measured by circulation figures, advertising revenues and normal business results. Coles, Woolworths, Bunnings and other retailers measure their performance by sales volumes, warehouse and distribution costs and usual business results. Each industry has its own methods for measuring operational performance as well as the usual business performance indicators.

With regional tourism, there are two approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Private sector management like Tourism Wollongong, Margaret River Tourism, Tourism Central Australia, Tourism Top End, Tourism Tropical North Queensland, RTO's throughout NZ, USA, Canada, UK and other overseas locations</th>
<th>It is standard practice for each of these organisations to have at least one VIC integrated with the tourism organisation as part of their operations.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>An important point to note is that with all these organisations, the management is accountable for results achieved.</strong></td>
<td>The performance of these organisations is measured by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Industry figures like visitor numbers, visitor nights, VIC results, levels of industry support,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Results achieved from destination marketing activities, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Business operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector management in SA</td>
<td>Often the local tourism industry is fragmented like the Riverland where the Regional Tourism Association has had no line management links with Visitor Information Centres thereby preventing any form of business development planning. Just having a good working relationship is not the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also having Visitor Information Centres under Council management further complicates any attempt to rationalise resources to produce better results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>An important point to note is that with the public sector, there is NO accountability by the management for results achieved.</strong></td>
<td>It is a normal function of the public sector to use KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) as their form of performance measurement. But these are usually useless because they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Measure results is in generalities, not finite terms, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There is no accountability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If there is to be worthwhile performance measurement of this plan, it is essential that

- **ACCOUNTABILITY BE INTRODUCED AT ALL LEVELS TO STOP THE CURRENT PRACTICE OF WASTING HUGE SUMS OF PUBLIC MONIES AND PRIVATE SECTOR FUNDS ON USELESS ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION WITHOUT UNDER-PINNING WITH MARKETING ACTIVITIES TO CAPTURE BOOKINGS,**
- Private sector business skills and tourism marketers have to be introduced at both Board and management levels LIKE Australian public companies,
- Professionals with proven competitive business and competitive tourism marketing acumen need to be appointed at both Board and management levels as the private sector normally does.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

TOURISM IS A COMMERCIAL INDUSTRY OF SMALL BUSINESSES AND DESERVES PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT FREE OF POLITICS

For the calibre of talent needed to rejuvenate the Riverland tourism industry, the management team, politics and parochialism needs to be set aside and experienced management and marketing talent be recruited from outside SA. Some parochial minded people and some in the public sector will be aghast at this proposal but it is time that these people came into the 21st century.

This plan calls for investment by taxpayers, ratepayers and the Riverland visitor industry to secure a prosperous future for the region’s visitor economy. For this reason, it is important that a set of performance measurements be put in place. These are set out below.

Any commercial driven activities developed by the private sector always have mechanisms for measuring results. With the Riverland tourism industry being managed by the public sector over many years, there has been no collection of any specific data to measure performance. This plan has to “start from scratch” to build performance and trend measurements.

Around the world, Regional Tourism Organisations under private sector management like Margaret River, Tourism Central Australia, Tourism Tropical North Queensland, Echuca Moama Tourism, Christchurch Tourism, Tourism Victoria (Vancouver Island), New Orleans Tourism, Yorkshire Tourism and many others all operate as business units and are accountable to their Boards, industry stakeholders and funding agencies which means they have to maintain reliable statistics about their business operations and visitor trends. This has not been the case in the Riverland in the past.

MONITORING PERFORMANCE

Because the SA tourism industry has been managed at all levels by the public sector for so long, there is very little understanding in the public sector as to how successful destination marketing organisations operate in other states, New Zealand, Canada, USA, UK, Hong Kong and other countries. They have all embraced the digital era and the commercial value that it offers but not SA outside SATC.

This plan advocates the adoption of 21st century management practices under competent and experience private sector management. Only then will the appropriate modern measurement of performance be possible.

Tourism is not an industry where results can be measured in simple terms. Tourism is an industry, which like many others, is measured by a various array of complex indicators

For the Riverland region, it is proposed that statistics be progressively compiled from these sources

- Federal Government,
- Industry support,
- Destination marketing campaigns
- Digital marketing,
- Marketing operations,
- Visitor Information Centres,
- Events
- Other sources
Regional Visitor Monitor
Section C 3 also advocates the introduction of Regional Visitor Monitor on a quarterly basis preferably. With the right information, a periodic Regional Visitor Monitor would be useful for industry stakeholders, funding agencies and potential investors.

Destination Management System
With the aid of digital marketing facilities, it is proposed that a Destination Management System become the central point for compilation of relevant performance statistics. This practice is progressively being introduced by the more professional destinations because of its enormous management and marketing benefits.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT INDICATORS
Shown below are the various avenues available to monitor management performance.

Federal Government
Statistical reports from the Federal Government include

- Domestic Tourism Monitor. Produced quarterly, this is regarded across the industry as the most important source of reliable information to measure the performance of the industry in terms of visitor numbers, visitor nights and visitor expenditure. It is the source of all information for tables and graphs in this plan.
- Tourism Satellite Account. Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) is published by ABS for the Australian tourism industry annually. The TSA is the benchmark for estimating the economic contribution of tourism. It provides measures of tourism gross domestic product (GDP), tourism gross value added (GVA), tourism trade, and employment in tourism.

Industry support
This is in two categories

- Industry support for destination campaigns in cash, kind and marketing cooperation, and
- Membership numbers and revenues from membership activities.

No destination marketing organisation can be fully effective unless it is catering to the needs of the industry and providing the effective marketing which delivers customers. This is the formula to maximise private sector investment in destination marketing. Such investment can be measured by

- Number of tourism businesses that participate in any given campaign,
- Cooperation they provide with support needed like packages, special offers, special rates for the campaign, prizes for competitions, etc
- Cash and/or kind contributions to the campaign budget

Membership numbers are an important indicator

- As a total number,
- As a percentage of all potential memberships across the region,
- Participation rates in industry activities like marketing campaigns, seminars and workshops, annual tourism awards, networking nights, etc

Destination marketing campaigns
There are three types of campaigns

- Major campaigns,
- Sector campaigns,
- Tactical campaigns
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

**Major campaigns.** These are campaigns usually planned months in advance and can involve partners inside and outside the region who contribute to a sizeable project budget. The most successful of these activities are known as integrated, targeted, cooperative marketing campaigns as distinct from a cooperative advertising campaigns. Such campaigns have been rare in SA but are an essential part of the future prosperity of the Riverland tourism industry.

**Sector campaigns.** These are developed closely with sector businesses so that their results can be boosted. A good example is the proposed Houseboats campaign where Destination Riverland would take the lead role and develop the overall campaign with input from houseboat stakeholders. Such campaigns are an essential part of the future prosperity of the Riverland tourism industry.

**Tactical campaigns.** These are usually short term activities with short term aims targeting short term results as follows

1. Launching new marketing initiatives like the 101 Holiday Ideas concept designed to drive customers into the various Towns and Villages across the region,
2. Food and Wine campaigns and events to stimulate demand for specific markets,
3. Seasonal campaigns aimed at stimulating demand during soft periods.

Each campaign would
- Offer products to be easily purchased particularly online by impulse buyers,
- Depend on industry support with suitable products and funding support.

**Digital marketing**

One of the great benefits available from this new technology is the ability to extract a wide variety of performance statistics automatically. Some indications are

**Websites.** These statistics provide a feedback on the number of hits, which webpages are visited and lots more. These and other statistics can provide valuable market intelligence also

**Online bookings.** These can also provide market intelligence as well as the number of bookings, when received, revenues written, etc

Both websites and online booking statistics can provide statistics to show achievements which can be published for the industry and community to know about through consumer media

**e-newsletters.** An important marketing tool. Bigger databases of email addresses provide a bigger market reach for targeted marketing and periodic market communication. Growth of this database is a measure of marketing success.

**Competitions.** A modern promotional tool is the use of competitions particularly for destination awareness strategies. Attracting entries is an important market communication process. The more popular that the Riverland becomes, the more customers will be interested in listing for the newsletters and competitions. This leads to greater market reach by the Riverland

**Surveys.** This is a major benefit from this technology. It is possible to conduct very low cost surveys of different kinds such as
- Industry surveys about issues under consideration,
- Visitor Satisfactory Surveys
- Consumer surveys with market demand type questions

**Facebook.** A popular feature with some market segments. The number of conversations and dialogue can be measured

**Marketing operations**

This is an area of low activity in the Riverland but a key function of successful destination marketing organisations. Areas where improvements are needed and monitored closely include
- Packages,
- Attractive pricing offers including value added propositions,
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

- Bookings flowing from specific marketing activities,
- Use of packages, special offers, etc sold as part of particular campaigns

Visitor Information Centres
Visitor Information Centres are often the first point of purchase for many visitors plus they offer availability of local products on sale. Statistics that can measure performance include
- Bookings made through the VIC and value of revenues from such bookings,
- Value of other sales at the VIC,
- Number of walk-up visitors, phone calls and emails

Events
In this plan, closer links are proposed across the region between the RTO and events. While each event would continue to be responsible for its own promotional program, Destination Riverland could play a part in assisting Organising Committees to achieve better results

Measuring results from events. It is also recommended that the Riverland Councils adopt procedures used by Mildura Rural City Council which have been successful in staging better events attracting more visitors and giving residents better events. An important part of that process calls for organising committees to provide Council with certain post-event statistics. These statistics can be used to gauge the success of this plan for Destination Riverland.

Other sources
There are several areas where performance effectiveness can be measured. They include

Sponsorships. It is a practice with some private sector managed Regional Tourism Organisations to obtain sponsorships from various local organisations in cash or kind. Obtaining such support is not possible unless potential sponsors feel that the RTO is doing a good job for the community.

Other sectors of the Visitor Industry. A significant element of this plan aims to develop close links with various sectors e.g. Food and Wine, Golf, Events, Motor Sports, etc

These links are designed to boost the results of the other sectors so as to overcome fragmentation as well as to pool expertise and resources to benefit the wider commercial performance of the Riverland including the visitor industry.

E-shop. An E-shop is proposed for the new destination website with three aims
- To make Riverland products available to the world
- To allow potential Riverland visitors to identify products that appeal and to buy when in the region, and
- To earn revenues for Destination Riverland to offset the operating costs incurred providing the service.

Success of the scheme can be measured by
- The number of products sold and number of suppliers that use the E-shop,
- Sales made through the E-shop.

Publicity. An important part of marketing is to secure publicity through media coverage (column cms, TV and radio). But someone has to manage the process for best results. For this reason, this plan proposes to recruit a PR consultant outside the region. The success of the PR consultant can be measured not only by the publicity achieved but by the added bonuses of obtaining low cost market reach with media for marketing initiatives. Also being outside the region, participation in publicity initiatives by other organisation can be secured for the Riverland.

Membership services. Successful RTOs are able to provide membership services for the industry and do it on a “fee-for-service” basis that can add revenue to RTO operating budgets.
Towards 2015 and Beyond
Working with Riverland businesses to grow the visitor economy

PART B
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

PART B – TOWARDS 2015 OUTLINE PLAN

Rejuvenation of Riverland tourism industry
Restore visitor growth
Join with allied industries to boost the Visitor Economy
REJUVENATING RIVERLAND TOURISM

THE CHALLENGE

There are three aspects to the challenge that the Riverland tourism industry faces:

1. The need to recover a decade of destination marketing neglect by bringing Riverland tourism industry businesses and the Destination Marketing Organisation up to competitive standards with 21st century digital marketing skills and professional marketing planning. This will be a three year task. It should not be expected to be completed any quicker.

2. To embrace the other elements of the visitor industry in the Riverland for joint activities and mutual benefits.

3. Very important. Reforming tourism industry operations so that by 2015 when the tourism industry moves into its next phase of development, industry structures and commercial operations will be at a level where the Riverland can move into the next phase smoothly to extract maximum economic benefit.

KEY TO SUCCESS

The key to success with rejuvenating the Riverland tourism industry is a new Regional Tourism Organisation, Destination Riverland. This needs to be an independent private sector business unit with a skilled experienced management team that can:

1. Deliver new destination marketing activities that boost demand for the region including integrated, targeted, cooperative marketing campaigns with industry contacts in the region.

2. Can introduce the necessary upgrade of websites and online booking arrangements as well as introduce digital marketing facilities.

3. Can work closely with tourism businesses so that they can come up to the standards needed to complement the destination marketing initiatives of Destination Riverland, and

4. Join with visitor industry partners to develop their skills and capabilities with attracting more visitors to the Riverland for their programs.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The strategic direction for the next three years aims to:

- Make the Riverland tourism industry more competitive with a focus on market development,

- Initially to adopt short term marketing strategies that focus on building cash flows for tourism businesses,

- Introduce professional standard destination marketing planning that builds demand for the Riverland through professional targeted marketing, PR publicity and promotions,

- Develop marketing plans for various industry sectors,

- Help tourism businesses to introduce competitive 21st century marketing techniques so as to access new markets including third party distribution channels,

- Concentrate most marketing activities and marketing funds on Adelaide and Regional SA markets plus some Western Victoria activities until visitor volumes have been restored to 2000 levels, and last but not least,

- Restructure Riverland tourism operations so that from 2015 onwards, the industry and Destination Riverland will be sustainable with qualified leadership and management, modern industry structures and a higher level of skills employed by tourism businesses.
## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective 1</td>
<td>To reverse the depressed state of the industry by restoring profitability and prosperity for the region’s visitor industry with tactical campaigns in the first year and new destination marketing strategies for the longer term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 2</td>
<td>To champion a successful, thriving, growing tourism industry for the long term with strategies that rejuvenate the private sector to contribute more to the Riverland economy while traditional industries are under pressure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 3</td>
<td>To offer visitors a range of towns and villages throughout the region so that the economic benefits of the rejuvenated strategies benefit all locations and all businesses servicing visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 4</td>
<td>To facilitate greater engagement between visitors and the many experiences that the region offers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 5</td>
<td>To introduce professional standard destination marketing management to achieve objectives 1-4 so that banks and other venture capital sources can again provide capital to facilitate growth of the Riverland tourism industry for existing and new businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 6</td>
<td><strong>To introduce accountability.</strong> All initiatives to be subjected to measurable results for results for all campaigns, corporate objectives and accountable financial management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PLAN IS IN THREE PHASES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Phase 1 (2011-2012) | • Create an independent Destination Riverland and introduce a new management structure with experienced private sector tourism management and marketing executives  
• Develop tactical marketing initiatives to quickly boost cash flows for tourism businesses  
• Work with tourism businesses to help them to introduce digital marketing capabilities and modern yield management policies to equip them to be able to participate in future destination marketing activities  
• Prepare for a major campaign in Phase 2 to re-establish the Riverland as a preferred leisure travel destination and to offer products for impulse buying. |
| Phase 2 (2012-2013) | Launch major campaign in two parts supported by a series of tactical campaigns to drive customers into various destinations and product sectors in the region. |
| Phase 3 (2013-2014) | Launch sector marketing plans and maintain seasonal campaigns aimed at boosting visitor numbers during periods of lower demand. |

Under-pinning all phases will be activities to

- Raise market “top of mind” association with the region, and
- Development of ongoing PR program to build awareness and counter any criticism of the region by the media
MARKETING PLAN
BUILDING A BETTER BUSINESS PERFORMANCE
FOR THE VISITOR ECONOMY

This Marketing Plan focuses on the following to achieve a better business performance for the Visitor Economy:
(1) Fundamental to success is recognition that tourism is a commercial industry driven by business outcomes and not just about advertising and promotions,
(2) Using modern destination marketing practices will be the method used to attract more visitors so that better business results can be achieved,
(3) Success for the Visitor Economy is paramount and can only be achieved by prosperous visitor industry businesses and successful events. To do this means getting these groups working more closely will be a priority,
(4) Driving customers into businesses will be the cornerstone of all marketing strategies. This can only be achieved if destinations target business outcomes and are effective,
(5) Addressing yield results over the full year will be necessary. Seasonality yields to be improved through better yield management,
(6) Modern tourism merchandising methods to be employed to make Riverland marketing more competitive,
(7) Maximum use to be made of 21st century digital era technology to make destination marketing more cost effective.

NEW DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANISATION
DESTINATION RIVERLAND

A new Destination Marketing Organisation, Destination Riverland has now been formed to replace the Riverland Tourism Association.

ROLE OF DESTINATION RIVERLAND
- To manage implementation of the Strategic Plan to restore growth and deliver for the Riverland, a strong, growing, competitive and prosperous tourism industry private sector for the Riverland,
- To provide strong experienced leadership and management for the tourism industry and competitive destination marketing,
- To maximise business results for the Riverland Visitor Economy and the community,
- To work closely with food, wine, events, retailers, golf, motor sports and other sectors to pool resources for mutual benefit from marketing activities.

MARKETING OBJECTIVES
- Boosting cash flows for tourism businesses is top priority,
- Helping tourism businesses to recover from the downturn and grow as quickly as possible,
- Boosting awareness for key market segments of Riverland and what it offers,
- Countering the “not much to offer” problem by developing the towns and villages clusters concept,
- All marketing to be market driven not product driven,
- Sector markets to be reached with targeted strategies e.g. suburban Adelaide residents, golfers, seniors market, etc,
- Where appropriate, new pricing policies to be introduced to lift yields.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

- Seasonal and other campaigns to maintain year round “top of mind” association for Riverland in key markets,
- Using seasonal campaigns to fill idle capacity in soft demand periods,
- Maximum use to be made of cross promotion in the region to boost yields.

CORNERSTONE OF ALL DESTINATION MARKETING

Factors to be at the cornerstone of all marketing to include
- Riverland destination website to be regarded as a key marketing tool for capturing business,
- Maximum use to be made of online booking capabilities,
- Building a database of customers for digital marketing,
- VERY IMPORTANT. Marketing, wherever possible, to be based on joint partnership with tourism and visitor industry stakeholders,
- Help for industry stakeholders to be successful with their own marketing activities.

MARKETING PLANNING

Marketing planning outlined is based on
- Boosting cash flows quickly,
- Reversing the visitor decline,
- Overcoming the “not much on offer” problem by highlighting the wide array of features to be enjoyed
- Using various techniques to raise market interest,
- Tailoring specific strategies for various industry sectors,
- Using digital era resources to target and capture new business more economically,
- Driving customers into the Riverland destination website and websites for individual businesses

NEW POSITIONING FOR THE REGION

A need exists to develop a new profile for the Riverland to boost its appeal as a desirable place to visit as a leisure destination.

The aim is to position the Riverland for all age groups as a destination which offers fun things to do, for adventure, fine food and wine, Murray River pursuits, the great cliffs of the Murray River, fabulous scenery, exciting events, superb golf and other great sporting facilities. The Riverland community tends to under-rate the wonderful array of enjoyable features for visitors to enjoy.

Whether visitors want an active holiday, a more relaxing time, a romantic break or some other pursuit, the Riverland has so much to offer.

To give the destination a new image, all market communication to carry a new approach is needed. This logo is indicative of the type of approach which will need to be considered

You’ll Love It!

There is a need for a statement along these lines to convey there is a great time waiting in the Riverland for visitors.
### PHASES OF THE MARKETING PLAN

It is proposed that the Marketing Plan be implemented in three phases. **Top priority will be to restore the economic health of the industry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Main priorities are</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2011/12)</td>
<td>(1) Creation of Destination Riverland was the first step now a new structure for Riverland destination marketing is required which should include</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- A Tourism Board chosen by the industry comprising senior level business executives with experience in strategic business and strategic tourism marketing management backgrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- A management team with a track record of success with destination marketing management from outside South Australia. It is essential that new managers be introduced unencumbered by the long standing SA culture,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Other key staff with local experience to manage local tourism operational activities, administration and accounting.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Functions of the new RTO will be to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Set a plan to restore the Riverland’s competitive situation in key markets,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Introduce the towns and villages concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Assist tourism businesses to become more competitive by embracing the digital era,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Assist the commercial performance of Riverland tourism businesses to embrace the new yield management pricing practices and adopt modern merchandising skills to capture more business including the use of packages and special offers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Launch marketing activities to rebuild market awareness and appeal of the Riverland as quickly as possible starting with the launch of the 101 Holiday Ideas brochure downloaded from the destination website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Move quickly to introduce short term tactical marketing initiatives to help tourism businesses to restore more profitable cash flow levels,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Begin planning for major integrated targeted cooperative marketing campaigns to target specific outcomes for Autumn and Spring 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Expedite upgrading of the Riverland website as the primary marketing tool for the region and very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Develop links to industry partners both within the region and based in key markets who can help the Riverland restore its position as a leading destination for leisure travel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Keeping awareness and appeal of the Riverland region growing through sector marketing initiatives, PR/publicity program, digital direct mail campaigns and consumer competitions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2012/13)</td>
<td>Launch of the Spring and Autumn campaigns will be key elements of this phase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also planned is a special campaign with RAASA by being involved in several marketing activities that reach up to as many 540,000 South Australians</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 3</th>
<th>During this phase focus will be on a series of sector campaigns to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2013/14)</td>
<td>- Raise market share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Stimulate awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Target specific measurable market demand outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strengthening results from integrated, targeted marketing initiatives with industry partners inside and outside the region will be a priority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Advance Tourism
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

IMPORTANT ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS

To improve Riverland destination marketing, three functions are planned but to be outsourced

- PR/publicity,
- Photo library management,
- IT contractor.

PR/publicity

Riverland’s poor level of destination awareness is due to an absence of publicity for the region particularly during recent difficult years.

There has been too much reliance on the SATC Publicity Unit. This is a fine feature of SATC operations and they do perform well but their primary task is to promote SA. However trying to simultaneously promote Adelaide and regions across the state has not led to ongoing coverage for the Riverland which is needed. It is physically just not possible for this small team of specialists to help the Riverland and cope with the needs of the Tourism Minister, the Tourism Board and SATC management which focuses mainly on Adelaide and priority nearby locations like the regions with 200 cellar doors, Kangaroo Island and Flinders Ranges.

Something that a good PR consultant can do, knowing the clients marketing objectives, is to bring to the region, proposals for publicity opportunities in key markets that would not normally be known to the Riverland. These can be very cost/effective. Also by retaining a PR consultant it is realised that if the consultancy is not producing the results that the client needs, the client can choose to switch to another PR consultant.

SATC PR Department has for many years provided excellent support for the industry but while it has been at no cost to regional overhead budgets, there are several limitations to the support they can provide

- Primary role of the SATC PR Department is to support SATC and the Tourism Minister,
- Each month SAStories is released to media around the world which contains a comprehensive list of editorial articles about many SA destinations and tourism products. This is part of SATC policy to promote SA
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

- The PR Department has no scope to find promotional opportunities for individual regions

The PR contractor retained by Destination Riverland would be required to work closely with SATC PR Department

Photo Library management

Images collected by Destination Riverland will come from several sources. Some will be commissioned by Destination Riverland. All images are costly and are extremely valuable for use with websites, brochures, media releases and other commercial activities.

As the Riverland restores a high level of awareness, there will be requests from media, trade contacts and others for images to be supplied for their project. It is in the Riverland's best interest for images to be despatched promptly electronically or by CDs in the mail.

To protect the Images Library, it is best managed by a professional under contract. This means photos are always safely stored, well catalogued, easily available for prompt despatch when instructed by the client and can be drawn on for client activities at short notice

IT contractor

Websites, online booking systems and digital marketing tools are very challenging requiring a specialist to stay abreast of the constant technology changes. It would be to advantage for Destination Riverland to accredit an official contractor preferably based in or near the Riverland. This contractor would work with tourism businesses and Destination Riverland to raise operating standards to competitive level.

This accredited specialist would work closely with the Destination Riverland IT Marketing Manager to dovetail marketing strategies with IT developments.
DIGITAL MARKETING

This is the Riverland’s greatest marketing weakness leading to the loss of many visitors. It is a major priority starting with a new modern destination website. On the next page is a proposed home page for the Riverland destination website which embraces the very latest format now in use for motivating customers to visit and maximise business results.

But a website alone will not deliver better results. It needs to be complemented by
- An online bookings system,
- Linkage to a channel management system,
- Good search engine management,
- E-newsletters with a data base of customers,
- Development of good merchandising skills to know how to extract best results from digital marketing,
- Likewise, good use needs to be made of yield management options,
- Linkage of destination marketing initiatives to third party distribution channels.

By using good home page displays and navigation links within the websites, it will be possible to highlight features and special offers of towns and villages.

For major campaigns, digital marketing enables temporary independent micro-sites to be used as a great marketing aid. These are developed with a link to the destination website.

Other marketing facilities that digital marketing offers are
- Electronic distribution of promotional flyers that drive customers to the destination website,
- Use of competitions to raise consumer interest,
- Surveys to assess consumer attitudes for market research

DESTINATION WEBSITE

On the next page is shown the proposed home page of a new destination website planned for the Riverland. Its main aims are to
- Create a favourable impression about the Riverland as a place to visit for a leisure break,
- Provide details to excite website visitors about the many features of the region,
- Offer many special features to enthuse website visitors to enjoy,
- Offer products for customers to buy

Special features to be noted
- Main picture at top rotates so that several other scenes from the region can be featured
- A double navigation bar across the centre aids easy navigation direct to information. It also highlights the range of information available to enable website visitors to get to know the region quickly and easily
- Around the sides are direct links to a variety of webpages for further information
- Modern features for websites linked to digital technology include the ability to conduct competitions which are used as sales promotion tools, not just publicity and a place to sign up for e-newsletters. These are used to promote what is happening at the destination, attractive features and special offers, packages, hot deals, etc. Although the example webpage has a special box to obtain a Visitors Guide, for this strategy, it is planned to replace the old-fashioned 96 page travel planner with a 16 page brochure with 101 Holiday Ideas for the Riverland. This to be easily downloaded from the destination website. Entries in the 101 Holiday Ideas to visit the region will be linked back to websites for individual businesses or to webpages on the regional destination website.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

You'll love the Riverland

Whether your idea of a holiday is a quiet time relaxing in an impressive scenic location of bush and river scenery, enjoying the local food and wines or being active bushwalking, water-skiing, canoeing or playing golf, the Riverland has it all. Discover the Willow-edged parks and fruit orchards, orchards and citrus groves.

Enjoy the peace and tranquility of relaxing on a Murray River houseboat with its cinematic riverside cliffs on one side and opposite, the graceful漫水 slime gums and national parks with their wide array of Australian birds. Popular with kayakers are the reed-lined narrow creeks, islands and wetlands of infinite variety.

Quality accommodation is not only on the houseboats. Discover the superb hotels, motels, B&Bs and caravan parks in towns and villages across the Riverland. If you enjoy wine tasting and dining, visiting cellar doors, a round of golf or a ride in a glider, the region has a range of exciting delights waiting for you. Explores the art and culture in the region’s museums and galleries.

Families are not forgotten. The Riverland has many tree pursuits like the Monash Adventure Park, riverside picnic areas where the children can catch yabbies, fishing spots for the more adventurous and life more. Experience good weather all year round. Come soon to enjoy the Riverland.

Hot Deals & Packages
FREE Attractions
Houseboat Holidays
You'll love our houseboats!

WIN a holiday
FREE Visitor's Guide

Wine & Food
What's On
Conferences and Meetings

Golfing Holidays
e-News sign up

Advance Tourism
TARGETED MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

While these would be primarily designed to target business outcomes, a section of the market communications process would be used to promote the features and reasons to visit to be enjoyed in the region.

With targeted marketing campaigns, it can be very fruitful to establish short term micro-sites with their own URL as Canberra has done with their “Wrapt in Winter” campaign for their lowest demand period of the year.

ONLINE BOOKING SYSTEMS

Riverland businesses and the destination as a whole are losing many customers today because Australian travellers have taken to online bookings with great enthusiasm. If the facility is not available many customers are no longer prepared to use old-fashioned methods to decide where to go and plan their travel. Many businesses in the Riverland will never know how many customers they have been losing and continue to lose.

Also having online booking capabilities is essential if the region is to build support for more customers from third party booking sources.

Tourism businesses across the region can tap into many booking systems to access more business but are reluctant to do so because of the work involved in maintaining status on several systems. This problem can be solved with the use of channel management systems but most are unaware of this facility being available.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

An essential part of any regional destination marketing organisation today is to have a Destination Management System which uses digital technology to monitor the business and marketing performance of the destination. Because digital marketing has not been introduced, this basic but essential management tool is not being used.

Destination Management Systems are used to monitor much valuable operating information like:

- Levels of use of the destination website and any links to destination marketing activities including monitoring of results,
- Search engine management,
- Online bookings made through the DMO’s booking systems,
- E-newsletters and readership statistics,
- E-brochures being downloaded and their successes
- Participation levels for competitions and results achieved,
- Micro-site website hits and booking results,
- Online selling performance of E-shop and VICs including reporting of sales results
- Operational and financial performance of the organisation’s other business operations,
- Use of surveys and other statistics for a periodic Regional Visitor Monitor, a valuable resource for both the industry, funding agencies and prospective investors,
- Statistical information about visitors to VICs, overheads, data for planning future strategies or compiling other management data for better business management.
RAISING RIVERLAND AWARENESS

Important elements of the proposed marketing activities to rebuild destination awareness of the Riverland rely on two activities:

- A strategy to give greater prominence to Towns and Villages clusters (see below), and
- Market communication activities to achieve this aim.

TOWNS AND VILLAGES CLUSTERS

Presently there is no emphasis on boosting demand for the smaller centres of the region. They play an important role for the region and need greater support for these reasons:

- Better promoted, they enhance the larger centres as day trip destinations. This in turn builds the appeal of the regional destination overall, and
- Visitors staying in the smaller centres become day trip patrons of the larger centres.

It will be a WIN/WIN for both the larger and smaller centres if each larger town and each group of smaller centres become “clusters” for purposes of destination marketing. The proposed new website home page (see earlier) has separate webpages for the Towns and Villages. Upon clicking on each of these tabs, a drop down menu will appear which lists all localities in the category. This will make it easy for customers to find more details about the towns and villages very quickly. Increased visitation can only lead to increased contributions to local economies.

For the smaller centres, for the first time they will have a much higher profile in destination marketing.

In the Towns category it is proposed to include Renmark, Berri, Barmera/Lake Bonney, Loxton and Waikerie.

In the Villages category would be the following

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Proposed marketing name for the Village area (See note)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Vic/SA border to Wilkadene on both sides of the Murray River</td>
<td>Border Cliffs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Paringa</td>
<td>Paringa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Lyrup, Pike River</td>
<td>See Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Monash, Glossop, Winkie</td>
<td>Monash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Loveday, Cobdogla, Moorook, Kingston-On-Murray</td>
<td>Banrock⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Overland Corner to Mallyons, Gluepot Reserve</td>
<td>See Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Blanchetown</td>
<td>Blanchetown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The proposed marketing name for each Village area has been chosen with marketing needs in mind. These names have been selected for their commercial appeal in distant markets which is the first priority.

Names for locations 4 and 7 have not been recommended. These to be decided by Destination Riverland.

A map showing the proposed Villages areas is shown on page vi.

⁴ Name recommended is to highlight where in the region can be found the Riverland’s greatest international attraction

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MARKET COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

DESTINATION BROCHURE

The traditional destination brochure which has been in use for over 30 years is to be superseded by a brochure with a new format, a 16 page “101 Holiday Ideas” (see below) which can be downloaded from the Riverland destination website or collected from local VICs.

With the closure of SATC Visitor Information Centre in Adelaide and SATC interstate offices together with automobile clubs no longer distributing destination brochures, it is virtually impossible for travellers to obtain present destination brochures unless they visit the region. Downloading of brochures from destinations websites is becoming a widespread practice because it means customers can access these references without delay.

The new “101 Holiday Ideas” brochure will promote the diversity of features and each entry will be cross referenced to a website in the region for further information.

FREE ATTRACTIONS

Many visitors are interested in FREE attractions which will bring them to the destination and become customers of other attractions and other businesses. These will be strongly promoted on the destination website and offer downloading of printed material with further details. These will not be expensive to produce.

ATTRACTIONS PASS CONCEPT

Growing in popularity at destinations around the world are Attractions Passes. While the sophisticated version of this concept is not suitable for the Riverland, there is an attractive alternative which can be made available through the Riverland website and regional VICs.

It is proposed that sheets of discounts and special offers for attractions, eating venues, retailers, etc be available for downloading. These sheets will serve as a very economical promotional tool as well as featuring special offers and discounts being used to attract patrons.

COMPETITIONS

This is a popular modern means of attracting consumer interest. To win an attractive prize from the destination, entrants would have to research the destination website or brochures for the information for their answers.

PR CAMPAIGN

There is no substitute for strong and effective PR support. This is a key element of raising awareness and maintaining consumer interest in the destination. This plan advocates retention of a PR consultancy (See page 49) on an ongoing basis to be responsible for

- Maintaining media coverage of the destination,
- Gaining publicity for regional features,
- Supporting marketing initiatives, and
- Where possible, helping individual tourism businesses in the region to get more market profile.

SATC has a very good Publicity Department and the Riverland PR consultant would be required to keep them informed about Riverland activities.

TARGETED MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

While these are primarily designed to target business outcomes, some market communications activities used for each campaign would be highlighting features to be enjoyed by customers.
101 Holiday ideas

SA's Riverland on the Murray River

You'll Love It!

So much fun, adventure, great food and wine, houseboat holidays, river cruising, national parks, water sports, golf, birds or just quiet relaxation in a secluded location.

All this and more waiting for you to enjoy.

Border cliffs near VIC/SA border bathed in sunshine

Internationally acclaimed Barrick Station Wine and Wetland Centre

Murray River shore at Walkinie with Murray River Queen at anchor

Monash Adventure Park Free family fun

Fun in SA's Riverland, now less than 3 hours from Adelaide

Photos courtesy Paul White Walkinie and Barrick Station
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

SECTOR MARKETING PLANS

Sector marketing plans below are also an effective way of raising awareness of features of the region while still promoting the features appealing to that sector. These marketing activities complement the overall marketing plan.

Shown as Attachments are proposed sector marketing plans for:

- Great Murray River Walk: A
- Food and wine: B
- Nightlife: C
- Houseboats: D
- Events: E
- Golf: F
- Nature: G
- Motor Sport: H
- Meetings and conferences: I
- Accommodation: J

As an example, Attachment D has a sector marketing plan to take Houseboats marketing in a new direction. On the next page is the proposed new Houseboats brochure front cover.
Sensational Houseboat Holidays

SA's Riverland You'll Love It!

Turning holiday dreams into reality!

Now only 3 hours from Adelaide
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

BUILDING A BETTER BUSINESS PERFORMANCE
FOR THE VISITOR ECONOMY

CURRENT SERIOUS PROBLEM
Banks and other sources of investment capital have made it clear they are not providing capital for tourism projects because of depressed industry profit levels and poor management of the industry’s commercial operations by the public sector.

There have been tourism enterprises in the Riverland who have had their businesses up for sale for some time but cannot get buyers.

For this reason the emphasis on product development must be to build demand and revenues for existing businesses without them incurring additional overheads. The aim is to lift demand levels so that profitability can be improved. This formula has been used very successfully for a previous client.

The section below addresses product development needed to fuel demand growth. Further details for each proposal are shown below

Attractions
Keynote new attraction – Great Murray River Walk.
Other important attractions – Lake Bonney and Country Music Hall of Fame

Food and Wine - Under-estimated for its economic importance to the visitor industry,

Nightlife - Linked to food and wine and represents a potential to enhance the visitor experience,

Houseboats – One of the region’s great assets in serious need of help.

Events – An important part of Riverland community life and could be contributing more to the visitor economy,

Golf – Another product with great potential being neglected yet the golf clubs have been suffering financially as much as the farming and wine sectors.

Nature including birds – Important part of the tourism product with a new approach needed

Motor sport – Already attracts large numbers of visitors each year. A proposal for a new complex near Barmera needs full support of the Riverland community,

Meetings and conventions – Potential to be a valuable contributor for the visitor economy.

Backpackers – The Riverland has four good backpacker lodge operations

E-Shop – As part of the new regional destination website, an E-shop is proposed. This will give the Riverland an electronic showroom to the world of travel books and references on sale, food and wine products, local art, other products.

Accommodation – For the present visitor levels, it is hard to advocate investment in any new bedstock. Making existing accommodation more profitable has to be the priority. However, if this proposed plan is put into affect and is successful, it will be necessary to seek private sector investment in new accommodation in various categories,
FURTHER DETAILS ARE AS FOLLOWS

GREAT MURRAY RIVER WALK

Famous in Australia and overseas are the following walks which attract considerable visitor numbers and several have attracted commercial operations providing guides and scheduling of organised tours. They also generate wide publicity in consumer media and in specialist publications read by walking enthusiasts

- West Coast Trail, South Island NZ,
- Overland Track, Tasmania,
- Great Ocean Walk, part of the Great Ocean Road, Victoria
- Heysen Trail connecting the South Coast with The Barossa and Flinders Ranges SA, and
- Bibbulmun Track, WA
- Larapinta Trail NT

The Riverland’s Great Murray River Walk follows the Murray River from Customs House near the SA/Victorian border and comes south through the Border Cliffs area and Chowilla to Renmark. This exciting concept is designed to generate customers for a variety of businesses along the route. For further details see Attachment A

LAKE BONNEY, BARMERA

This is already a very popular location with further potential. Lake Bonney is an aquatic playground popular with swimmers, canoeists, water skiers, windsurfers, jet skiers and fishing enthusiasts. The adjoining wetlands abound with wildlife. It is a drawcard for many visitors and events. It needs greater prominence in tourism destination marketing. However, it seems to have some operating limitations caused by overlapping of activities. An appeal is made to have the lake zoned so that jetskiers and other groups can use the lake without interfering with others.

ROCKY’S COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME, BARMERA

Country Music is popular with many Australians and some overseas visitors. Tamworth has claimed the title of Australia’s Country Music Capital having followed a long term strategy to build record visitor levels each Australia Day weekend. It is one of three major Country Music Festivals, the others being at Barmera over Queens Birthday Weekend and the other in Mildura in late September-October.

Road signage – Except at Waikerie, for Banrock Station and the National Parks, road signage throughout the Riverland is generally very poor and certainly not “visitor friendly”. While some in the public sector regard road signs as a roadside service for the travelling public these signs should also be regarded as a valuable contributor to the local economy for these reasons

- If poor signage results in customers (travellers) not reaching the destination or business that want to visit, that can mean lost revenue for the region, and
- Road signs particularly the brown tourist signs which are widely used tend to help educate both visitors and other travellers about features to be enjoyed in the region.

Present road sign practices are mostly not “visitor friendly”. Local residents may wish to defend the current signage but they have local knowledge for moving around the region and are unlikely to have an empathy with visitor needs in the area.

There is a definite need to help tourism businesses by ensuring that road signage facilitates easy travel around the region.
Each Festival lasts about 10 days and makes a valuable contribution to the local Visitor Economy. With help from Destination Riverland there is no reason why the Barmera June Festival cannot grow as the Tamworth Festival has done so over the years.

One of the region’s great tourist assets is the Rocky Country Music Hall of Fame which needs greater prominence. For country music fans there are some fascinating displays waiting to be enjoyed. It also needs reliable opening times which can be promoted as a feature of the complex. Dependent on volunteers, it is hard to establish consumer confidence when there is doubt about Hall of Fame opening times.

**FOOD AND WINE**

These two industries together with tourism represent the future economy of the Riverland but the lack of leadership for these sectors has led to a situation where there is a need for better coordination between the three groups of food, wine and tourists need to achieve mutual success. This new plan for the visitor industry addresses this issue.

The Riverland offers food through
- Splendid restaurants,
- Renmark Club with its floodlit Murray River views at night plus other clubs across the region
- Bonneyview Winery Restaurant & Cellar Door, Barmera,
- Magnificent bakeries at Loxton, Barmera, Waikerie, Berri and Renmark,
- Splendid chocolate shops at Monash and Waikerie,
- Wonderful specialist food shops,
- Produce shops and roadside produce stalls, both popular with travellers but given no prominence in tourism promotional material,
- Markets in various towns also largely ignored for their appeal in tourism promotional activities

There are fewer cellar doors than before the wine industry crisis yet they are so important to the visitor industry. The Riverland has some superb entrepreneurial wine producers with cellar doors who get little prominence in tourism marketing. Some of the variety of cellar doors are
- Banrock Station and wetlands,
- Burk Salter, Blanchetown also with Wine & Wetland Tours,
- 919 Wines
- Bonneyview Winery, Barmera.

More needs to done to help both the food and wine sectors and a proposal is shown in Attachment B

**NIGHTLIFE**

Most regional centres seem to think that visitors just want to retire to their accommodation at night and save their money. However, the Riverland economy wants them to spend their money but they cant do this if suitable product is not made available to enthuse them to buy.

Norfolk Island has a magnificent scheme in the evenings where visitors dine with locals. This very successful concept is another way of collecting visitor revenues for the local economy. Around the world, different marketing techniques are used to feature eating venues so as to make them appealing and help to entertain visitors at the same time. More details are shown in Attachment C
HOUSEBOATS – NEW APPROACH TO MARKETING TO BOOST DEMAND

Houseboats are a very important part of Riverland’s visitor economy, they also play an important part in positioning the Riverland as being in a unique part of the Murray River.

A significant marketing feature not being fully exploited is that Victoria has no cliffs along its section of the Murray River and it could be claimed that the cliffs in the Riverland are outstanding, possibly better than the cliffs in the Murraylands. These cliffs need a higher profile in Riverland destination marketing.

A new marketing strategy is proposed for the Riverland houseboat sector starting with a new approach to enthusing customers to buy houseboat holidays. It is proposed that a special brochure be produced supported with new merchandising methods. The first section of the new brochure is to promote what there is to enjoy on each of the four sections of the Murray River between the SA/Victorian border and Blanchetown. Another feature of the new strategy will be to feature pricing polices in a way that is more “customer friendly” and compatible with the online booking era. Attachment D provides further details.

EVENTS

Events are an important part of community life. They could be contributing more to the Visitor Economy but presently are not linked to destination marketing. Problems are being caused by events clashing which means visitors find it difficult to get accommodation, pressure on hospitality outlets, etc. Some events are starting to lose their appeal which is not desirable. These developments are not in the best interests of the Visitor Economy or the community. The new management at Destination Riverland should work with these organisations to address the problem.

This situation is addressed in Attachment E as a first step to a new era for events.

GOLF

This is a high spending sector with good repeat business potential but it has been neglected. During recent times, Riverland golf clubs have been suffering financially as much as the farming and wine industries have been under financial pressure. This plan proposes close links between tourism and the golf clubs to boost patronage which will generate revenues for the golf clubs and businesses in the visitor industry. Further details are shown in Attachment F

NATURE INCLUDING BIRDS

It is clear that there are many visitors that want to enjoy the wonders of nature. They are in two broad categories

- Travellers who just want to commune with nature by wandering through nature parks, along the Murray River banks or canoeing through the fascinating canals between Chowilla and the SA/Victorian border, and
- Enthusiasts with special interests whether it be bird enthusiasts, botanists or others

Bird enthusiasts are a very big world market segment offering the Riverland good potential. Good displays on the Riverland destination website with good search engine management could prove very rewarding.

The Riverland has ample opportunity for these visitors to see nature up close.

Further details are shown in Attachment G

MOTOR SPORT

Most people not connected with motor sport are usually not aware of the ability of this sport to attract large numbers of visitors many having above average incomes. A proposal by the local motor sports organisations for a new motor racing complex near Barmera is seeking maximum
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

support from Councils and the community with their bids for government funding. To achieve this facility will bring new incomes for the visitor economy. Attachment H has further details.

MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES
Economic potential from the meetings and conferences markets can be a good revenue earner from delegates who mostly have above average incomes. However, if they get it wrong, Councils will likely end up with an ongoing drain on Council budgets. Broken Hill has a very successful conference centre, a concept which should be considered for the Riverland. Attachment I has further details

BACKPACKERS
The Riverland has four good backpacker operations but their ongoing success is linked to job availability and the appeal of the destination as most backpackers being from overseas are travelling around Australia.

ACCOMMODATION
For present visitor levels, it is hard to advocate any new bedstock while investment capital sources are not lending for tourism. Making existing accommodation providers more profitable has to be the priority. However, if this long term plan is put into affect, it will be necessary to seek investment in different categories. Further details are shown in Attachment J.
DEVELOPMENT OF MARKET SECTORS

VARIOUS MARKET SECTORS ARE IMPORTANT TO THE VISITOR ECONOMY

Several valuable market sectors need to be targeted with details of Riverland features that are appealing.

ATTRACTIONS WITH WIDE APPEAL POTENTIAL

Attractions are the major reason for many to visit the Riverland. It is in the industry’s best interests to maximise patronage for free and commercial attractions to enhance visitor enjoyment and to increase tourism’s contribution to the visitor economy.

CROSS PROMOTION

There is a growing practice where accommodation providers, day tour and cruise operators and others cross promote attractions, restaurants and other local services to their clients. In Margaret River WA, wineries have arrangements with accommodation providers to recognise their room keys or introduction vouchers presented by customers. In return customers can buy their products or meals with a discount or special benefits.

Attractions operators can also help by promoting other attractions to their patrons. The longer visitors stay, the more they contribute to the revenues of visitor industry businesses and the Riverland economy.

ATTRACTIONS PASS CONCEPT

This concept is growing but for the Riverland a different approach will be possible. When the new website is operating, it will be possible to download A4 sheets with coupons promoting special offers to attract visitors to their businesses. An example from New Orleans can be seen at www.neworleansonline.com/tools/coupons.html

LOXTON HISTORICAL VILLAGE

This is a great asset for the Riverland which is under-utilised. To increase patronage and to help lift awareness for the region, it is proposed that a consumer competition be held in Adelaide to find a new merchandising name such as Sovereign Hill, Flagstaff Hill, Steamtown, etc.

During Phase 1 of this Plan, a consumer competition in the Adelaide Advertiser would invite readers to submit a name based on the criteria which would call for entrants to visit the Village’s website. After entries close, a new name would be announced as part of a publicity plan to attract good media coverage. The new name would be designed to excite both consumers and media.

YOUNG ADULTS

The Young Adults sector today is a very promising market. To build demand from this promising sector, the young adults market would offer these plusses:

- Many enjoy a good income level and can be mostly good spenders,
- Are often repeat visitors,
- Can be targeted with social media and other economical market communication avenues,
- Good potential as patrons of events,
- Add to the social life of the Riverland. It is important to have more activities that will bring young adults.

What will attract them? Some factors are:

- Adventure activities,
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- Fun times,
- Knowledge that young adults, particularly the opposite sex, also gather in the Riverland.

**FAMILIES**

Families are a very good revenue source for many visitor industry businesses. Family visitors from regional SA are just as important as families from Adelaide because there is just so much for them to enjoy as visitors from both markets.

Family groups are mainly thought to be families with school age children who can only visit during school holidays. But also commercially important are families with young children below school age who usually visit at times other than school holidays.

Visit California (USA) promotes “Family Fun” as a key marketing tool. Their destination website offers various attractions and special offers for this sector. Their destination website reads

“Conventional wisdom holds that California is for the young-and who are we to argue? The state is chock-full of attractions for kids of all ages, especially the under-18 set. From Disneyland, the granddaddy of all theme parks, to world-class aquariums, zoos, historical museums, and outdoor activities, California will keep your family engaged and hopping.”

**SENIORS**

Within the Riverland an uninformed view exists that the Seniors market is of little commercial value. This is far from correct. Today, seniors are a key market sector for

- The fast growing cruising market particularly from the East Coast,
- The Ghan,
- AAT/Kings and APT tours in Australia and overseas,
- Grey nomads who still travel in large numbers each year on their famous round Australia itinerary,
- Seniors newspapers and magazines which carry pages and pages of tourism advertisements offering packages, tours and other travel options.

Australia is now well and truly into the Baby Boomer era and a high percentage enjoy good retirement incomes because of their superannuation arrangements. They have both the time and the money to travel to places that attract them and promise enjoyable visits. Caravan manufacturers are very busy meeting the growing demand for large numbers of new caravans. As many caravan parks will attest, they are enjoying good site and cabin occupancies and in some instances, their occupancy rates are better than local motels and apartments.

Seniors also offer a commercial advantage as they prefer to stay at home during school holidays and travel in periods of lower demand.

More needs to be done by the Riverland to get a better market share of this sector.

**ROMANCE**

The weddings market has been changing for some years. Weddings in capital cities have never been more expensive, even if a suitable venue can be found.

There is also a growing number of two income partnerships (married couples or partners co-habiting). Because they are usually DINKS, but not every time, they need to get away for quality romance time.

As a result destinations and some tourism businesses have become quite aware that this is a growing high yield market with special needs. By catering to those needs, new business can be
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won. Often with two income partnerships they can afford upmarket facilities and can also become repeat customers.

As a result, destinations are now actively developing the romance market in different ways

- Romantic weekends for couples looking for a romantic break,
- Newly married couples wanting a honeymoon location,
- There is a growing market where the wedding is held at a regional location. The bridal couple and the wedding guests all travel to attend the wedding. One Riverland houseboat operator is already enjoying business from this market because while some of the guests return home after the wedding, many choose to stay on for a holiday while the bridal couple go off on their own.

Targeted marketing is the best approach for this segment and the results can be very rewarding.

RETAIL THERAPY

One of the most important parts of any leisure destination is the availability of shops for retail therapy. It is such an important part of the enjoyment for many visitors. It is also a very valuable part of collecting Visitor Economy revenues for local businesses. The Riverland has some excellent retail options including

- Specialist outlets like the chocolate shops at Monash and Waikerie. Also there are special food shops like the nut shops and the fine food shop at Waikerie
- Superb bakeries like Loxton, Barmera, Waikerie and others,
- Markets like the Berri Riverland market, the Barmera market, the Loxton market and others

This plan advocates that Destination Riverland (new RTO) and Chambers of Commerce should work together to increase visitor interaction with retailers across the region.

E-Shop - As part of the new regional destination website, it is proposed to include an E-shop so that customers around the world and customers when in the Riverland can buy local products. It will give the Riverland an electronic showroom of local foods and wine products, local art, travel books, references and other products on sale.

This will open up new demand for Riverland products from distant customers or for travellers to come and buy in person

Wide range of retailers - Window shopping is a popular pastime with many visitors. They look to make purchases of items they don’t find at home. Spontaneous purchases are very important.

Also important and not to be forgotten are the many purchases made by travellers for their daily needs.

Cross promotion – A very effective promotional tool is for accommodation providers to cross promote retailers. The main aim of the Visitor Economy is to make all kinds of businesses more prosperous. At no extra cost to the marketing budget, by accommodation providers and others recommending shopping options available within the region, visitors can become customers of retail businesses.
COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

THE RIVERLAND IS LOSING VISITOR CUSTOMERS BECAUSE
NO ATTENTION IS BEING GIVEN TO THE COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT
Riverland visitor numbers are down 35.8% since 2000 but no-one connected with the Riverland tourism industry, public sector or private sector, seems to be interested as to why competitor destinations are able to attract customers away from the region. This is a fundamental activity for any commercial operation.

LITTLE RECOGNITION OF THESE KEY ISSUES
SERIOUS PROBLEM. No recognition has been given by South Australian Tourism Commission, Riverland Tourism Association, Riverland Councils or Riverland tourism businesses as to the damage being done to the region’s tourism results by competitor activity.
Presently, visitor numbers are down about 35.8% on 2000 which means the region is suffering an annual $41 million loss in revenues for the tourism industry and the Riverland economy. Over 2009-10-11 projected revenue losses are estimated at $108 million. Between 2000 and 2008, revenue losses were estimated at over $100 million for the tourism industry and the Riverland economy. But no concern is being shown about these huge losses and there is no concern being seen about competition from other destinations and competitive leisure travel options being offered by The Ghan, airlines, travel industry and many other competitors. WHY IS THE RIVERLAND NOT SHOWING CONCERN? IT IS COMPETITION WHICH IS TAKING RIVERLAND CUSTOMERS TO OTHER PLACES AND LACK OF EFFECTIVE DESTINATION MARKETING STRATEGIES TO COUNTER THE SITUATION. It is not due to product issues.

Region not competitive
Many of the Riverland’s problems flow from SA state destination marketing policies not being competitive as follows
• There are no digital marketing initiatives in the regions to match SA’s competitors,
• Advertising and promotion advertising practices are still 1990s when SA’s competitors are using modern communication methods and cater to the impulse buying market
• Targeted marketing in regions is non-existent and resources provided for local initiatives are not adequate to be competitive
• Since before 2000, destination marketing support for the Riverland has been a very low priority
• Website and online booking system arrangements across the region are not competitive. In some instances, website standards could be a deterrent to some prospective visitors
• The absence of modern marketing methods like merchandising initiatives and yield management pricing has prevented the region from accessing business from both impulse buyers and third party distributors who reach markets the Riverland could never reach.

There is almost no representation of Riverland products on third party distribution channels giving other destinations a competitive advantage. Customers will not buy Riverland products if they are not on offer, they will choose products that they can easily buy online
• Remote control management from Adelaide has not helped the region’s private sector to show its ability to provide entrepreneurial flair, enterprise, business nous, sales driven marketing, market development of initiatives to protect market share or other modern marketing activities.
There is a very long list of other travel choices that are having an adverse affect on Riverland results. Shown below are just a few which provide a small insight into this huge problem.

Tourism NT

Tourism NT in 2010 signed a $2.5 million marketing arrangement with Seven Media Group. This agreement gives Tourism NT a series of TV commercials directing viewers to the Tourism NT website. Seven Media Group agreement also includes extensive digital marketing on Yahoo7.

On Yahoo7 also appeared an outline video series promoting the destination.

This campaign was also supported with online, outdoor, print and Pay TV advertising along with a special Red Centre airfare with Qantas.

Tourism Businesses in the Red Centre invested $1.1 million in the 2010 Tourism NT Red Centre marketing campaign. This was for six weeks and had a combined audience of 9.8 million online users and 21.3 million off-line customers.

Tourism NT’s consumer website featured an additional 50 value-added Red Centre travel deals.

NT Tourism Minister Tim McCarthy said “Tourism is a vital economic driver for Central Australia and the Northern Territory Government is committed to just providing more opportunities for local industry to partner with Tourism NT to promote their products and our priority destination

SATC HAS NO SIMILAR SOPHISTICATED MARKETING CAMPAIGN. A very big difference between SATC and Tourism NT is that

- SATC has chosen to manage regional tourism from Adelaide with state-wide policies that conform to the State Tourism Organisation’s role of promoting the state. Unlike Tourism NT, targeting business for the private sector has not been part of this policy.
- Tourism NT’s approach is to work with the private sector Regional Tourism Organisations and industry businesses. Tourism NT works in partnership with the industry to jointly develop targeted marketing campaigns that drive customers into private sector businesses so as to boost the Visitor Economy.

Also SATC is not accountable for results whereas Tourism NT always knows what results they achieved from the campaign for the private sector.

The Ghan

Great Southern Railways maintains a constant presence on TV, in print and online. GSR is first class with it’s use of modern merchandising techniques to keep up their load factors on The Ghan between Adelaide, Alice Springs and Darwin.

Mildura

One of Mildura’s most important markets is Adelaide. Each year many South Australians from Adelaide drive through the Riverland to holiday in Mildura.

Tourism Mildura is a private sector managed Destination Marketing Organisation which enjoys the funding benefits of a rate levy introduced by Mildura City Council in 1995. It also enjoys a significant annual contribution from the Council. Mildura’s destination marketing is very entrepreneurial similar to the entrepreneurial levels outlined in this plan.

During this project, from enquiries made by Advance Tourism, no information was obtained from within the Riverland region as to why South Australians choose to holiday in Mildura rather than in the Riverland.
Advance Tourism was once retained to produce a Tourism Development Plan for Mildura and during this period learned that they are winning many visitors for their destination in the Adelaide market they use effective destination marketing which maintains “top of mind” association for Mildura. In the process they are able to feature reasons to visit Mildura which would be perceived as a destination which is vibrant, modern and a great place to have fun.

This is not the image that the Riverland would currently be projecting in Adelaide if it has any presence at all. This plan advocates a variety of activities to present the Riverland in a new and exciting way to the Adelaide and regional SA markets.

**Sealink**

No-one in the Riverland during this project mentioned the competition from Sealink’s very professional marketing in the Adelaide market. As a professional tourism marketer, Sealink is as good as any similar organisation in Australia and they maintain a constant presence in the Adelaide market.

Sealink also produces some first class collateral material which features an array of package holiday offers on Kangaroo Island. Their self-drive holiday brochure for Adelaide and Southern Australia also includes packages for SA regions including Murraylands, Barossa, Clare Valley, Flinders Ranges and others but not Riverland.

Sealink website www.sealink.com.au is also at the standard the Riverland needs if it is to be competitive.

**IMPULSE BUYING**

Since 2000, the digital era and competition from low cost airlines have caused a huge change in consumer buying practices. Today with the aid of digital marketing, modern merchandising methods and adoption of modern yield management programs, many tourism businesses and many destinations because they are enjoying strong patronage by catering to this phenomenon.

This is a business opportunity being completely missed by the Riverland.

**THIRD PARTY DISTRIBUTORS**

The main third party distributors are very active with traditional and digital era promotional methods to drive customers to their websites and sometimes their retail outlets. This is the only way they can earn revenues to stay viable.

With the cooperation of tourism businesses and tourism destination marketing organisations, they are able to promote very attractive travel bargains for their clients.

Neither SA or the Riverland has much presence in most of these programs

**LOW COST AIRLINES**

Low cost airlines serving Adelaide are taking SA customers away interstate and even overseas at the expense of SA regions particularly the Riverland.

The airlines constantly offer cheap fares and attractively priced packages for leisure trips or to attend events.

SA as a whole and regional destinations like Riverland are offering NOTHING to make regional SA appealing. There are no campaigns to counter the visitor number downturns. There are no strategies to offer “price leaders” to generate interest in holidaying in regional SA. Such actions are not SATC policy and regions like Riverland do not have the resources to launch counter-measures.
SATC MURRAY CAMPAIGN

The SATC decision to merge Murraylands and Riverland into one Murray region highlights is commercially backwards step. Customers visit destinations on the Murray River in the same way that when holidaying in New Zealand, Queensland, Western Australia or other states, they choose to holiday in one or more locations.

Murray River is a national brand name and each time SATC promotes the Murray River in isolation, they are also promoting the Murray River over the border. Victoria and New South Wales are aware of this competitive commercial imperative which is why they protect individual destinations as shown in the advertisement for Echuca Moama in Attachment D.

Not only do SATC Murray River advertisements submerge the Riverland brand but the region is singularly disadvantaged because

- Its main features are not highlighted, and
- SATC Murray River marketing tends to give higher prominence to Murraylands, sometimes to the exclusion of any exposure for the Riverland.

Any Murray River advertising in Victoria promotes individual locations like Yarrawonga/Mulwala, Echuca/Moama, Cobram/Barooga and other destinations on the River with Murray River being featured at the bottom of the advertisements as the overall brand. SATC should do the same.
COMPETITIVE DISADVANTAGE - DIGITAL MARKETING
ONE OF THE RIVERLAND’S MAJOR MARKETING SHORTCOMINGS

Embracing the digital era at a competitive level after 11 years of neglect will take considerable effort, skills and resources. Adopting any compromise approach which does not address the seriousness of this situation can only prolong the competitive disadvantage which exists presently. THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE. THIS IS ABOUT CONTEMPORARY BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND THE TOUGH COMPETITIVE NATURE OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY.

Until digital marketing in the Riverland reaches an optimum operating level, the region will face

- An inability to be competitive which will mean further lost patronage, and
- Not being able to lower destination marketing costs

MAIN FEATURES NEEDED TO BE COMPETITIVE

Digital marketing has seen rapid expansion in recent years and is proving very effective. But no recognition has been observed from the public or private sectors of the Riverland. The Council Chief Executive Officers have each updated to the latest technology for their daily operation with personal iPads. But the Riverland tourism industry has not embraced technology and this is the damage that has been done to tourism industry results

- Lack of a competitive destination website which stimulates demand and captures bookings,
- No wide use of competitive standard websites by individual tourism businesses that interface with the regional website,
- Lack of use of micro-sites for major campaigns,
- Need for individual towns and villages of the region being featured on their own webpage
- Need for online booking capabilities for accommodation, houseboats, attractions and events,
- Use of channel management systems for tourism businesses to reach modern digital marketing channels
- Need for e-newsletters and e-sales promotion advices
- Need for downloading from the destination website of brochures and promotional material
- Lack of use of competitions as a promotional tool,
- Lack of use of consumer surveys to measure market demand trends,
- Lack of modern merchandising initiatives which can be used to enhance digital marketing activities to combat competitors and grow new demand
- Lack of modern yield management practices to boost revenue earnings of businesses and for modern digital era marketing practices to combat competitors and grow new demand
- Lack of performance monitoring,
- Lack of management statistical reporting

and worst of all,

- In the Riverland region, there is a wide lack of understanding of the region’s poor competitive situation.
TARGET MARKETS

Overseas marketing usually takes 3-5 years before there is any return on marketing budgets and then only small. For the Riverland, spending marketing budgets on overseas markets is not likely to be rewarding for at least 5 years, maybe 10 years.

PRIORITY TARGET MARKETS

Each targeted market segment is important to the strategy to grow business (more visitors) from priority markets which for the Riverland are

- Adelaide (Pop 1,647,800)
- Regional South Australia (Pop 538,000)
- Western Victoria from Ballarat to the Victoria/SA border

MARKETING BUDGET FIRST THREE YEARS

For the first three years, it is proposed that most marketing budgets be committed to Adelaide and regional SA with some funds allocated to Western Victoria activities. In view of the need to re-establish strong awareness and appeal of the Riverland in SA markets, it is unlikely resources will be available for new market development in Years 1-2.

OTHER AUSTRALIAN MARKETS NOT A PRIORITY INITIALLY

Targeting of other Australian markets on a speculative basis is not recommended until 2015 and only then if a cost/benefit study shows any promise. SATC should be encouraged to take the lead with interstate market development initiatives which would open up new business opportunities.

OVERSEAS MARKETS

Targeting overseas visitors is not envisaged for at least the first three years as any cost/benefit will be slow.

Overseas marketing usually takes 3-5 years before there is any return on marketing budgets and then only small. For the Riverland, spending marketing budgets on overseas markets is not likely to be rewarding for at least 5 years, maybe 10 years.

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5 Australian Bureau Statistics
NEW APPROACH TO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

21st century competitive pressures dictate a whole new approach needed by the Riverland Visitor Industry

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

With the Riverland’s destination marketing using 1990’s policies and methods, it is essential the region’s destination marketing adopt the same practices adopted by Riverland’s competitors to win business (visitors) away from the Riverland.

Some Riverland businesses will be reluctant to embrace new methods

It is expected that some tourism businesses will choose not to change their operations to fit in with modern practices. They are being catered for with these arrangements.

All proposals outlined in this plan are based on industry stakeholders being invited to participate without any obligation to do so. There will be no compulsion. However, they will be encouraged to consider the business opportunities that the new era offers.

The new procedures, digital marketing arrangements and campaigns are designed to help tourism stakeholders to improve the performance of their businesses. Destination Riverland programs will be designed so that the primary aim will be to boost the commercial performance of businesses across the region.

During Phase 1, because cash flows are so tight, it is proposed that all market communication activities offer priced products or other product driven initiatives. During this phase, tourism businesses will be able to buy-in by offering generous discounted rates or special offers. It is proposed that the full cost of any advertising or other market communication activities be borne by the Destination Riverland budgets.

This is in keeping with the objective to help restore cash flows and profitability as quickly as possible.

During Phase 2, this plan is based on tourism businesses buying into market communication initiatives with modest contributions providing that they continue to offer generous discounted rates or special offers.

During Phase 3, as the trading situation should be back to normal, it is proposed that industry stakeholders buy-in at normal commercial rates. This is very important for the long term success of Destination Riverland and its destination marketing activities.

MAIN DRIVING FORCES FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The four main challenges facing the Riverland are

- **Restoring destination awareness and appeal.** This is the highest priority if visitor numbers are to grow,
- Any initiatives associated with restoring destination marketing need to be closely linked with initiatives to **capture new business opportunities for visitor industry enterprises**
- All marketing to **embrace digital marketing** in all its forms and to be used widely,
- Armed with access to digital marketing tools, strive to **maximise exposure of Riverland products on third party distribution channels**
VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRES

Originally created to provide a free information service for visitors.
Today, in addition to providing this service, VICs are an integral part of destination marketing with a role to introduce visitors as customers to local businesses.

In the modern era,

- Visitor Information Centres have become business units and are an integral part of the region’s destination marketing strategies,
- One VIC usually becomes the operational centre for destination marketing including managing the operations of the destination website, online reservations system and for digital marketing activities the support unit,
- With destination marketing campaigns they need a call to action contact reference point which usually includes the website URL and the contact details for one VIC,
- Many VICs around Australia today have moved to a more commercial approach. While still providing a free information service, they are keen to earn revenues to offset overhead budgets through maximum bookings and sales of local products,
- As part of the new commission earnings approach, online bookings have introduced a new income stream for many VICs,
- More recently, the website revolution has reduced the reliance of travellers on using VICs. This means modern regional VICs need to be positioned in high profile locations to capture “walk-up” traffic. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT because many visitors to a destination do not get to know of attractions, cellars doors, restaurants and many other facilities and services otherwise. An often forgotten role of a VIC is also to try and persuade uncommitted visitors from motoring on to another region and to keep them at that destination,

It is essential that VICs be located in high profile locations that are easily found and well sign posted on the approach roads. Another consideration is for visitors that may come into town, get settled in their motel, B&B or caravan park. If they then look for the VIC will they find it easily?

- With a commercial approach, VICs can more readily demonstrate just how important they are to the local industry. By making bookings and collecting commissions, there is no better way to do it and this helps overhead and marketing budgets at the same time.

PROPOSED CHANGES

For this plan the following changes are proposed

- All five VICs to be transferred to the new Destination Marketing Organisation, Destination Riverland, on the basis that present Council funding be transferred as well. Loxton Waikerie Council has signalled some problems with this proposal. However, this amalgamation of VICs will deliver synergies and efficiencies which will be very beneficial to the rejuvenation of the tourism industry private sector commercial performance,
- The headquarters of Destination Riverland needs to be collocated with one VIC so that the marketing and operational functions can be seamless with benefits for the marketing performance but also budgetary advantages,
- Renmark and Berri VICs need to be relocated to new sites to where there is a better catchment of passing motoring travellers with and without caravans in tow.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

- A new site for the Renmark VIC is needed to capture interstate traffic coming through Paringa and travelling through to southern parts of the region and to other parts of SA. In a gateway role, there will be opportunities to pick up additional revenues for the VIC,

- The Berri VIC is not a “customer friendly” site for travellers and relocation to the main highway will provide both travellers and the local visitor industry with better service,

- As the upgrading of digital marketing is introduced across the region, there will need to be close attention given to providing the VICs with the best technical tools possible,

- An early priority for Destination Riverland will be to consider how to lift the earnings of the five VICs. Barmera and Waikerie VICs are working on a “franchise type” system and every consideration needs to be given to their specific needs.
Extract from Tourism NT Tourism Development Strategy 2008-2012

Our Regional Tourist Associations and Visitor Information Centres (RTAs/VICs) are integral to providing on-the-ground support to industry members and for regional marketing and product development. Their future role in assisting our tourism industry to become truly e-enabled and to deliver superior business and service standards cannot be underestimated. They too are embracing change in order to deliver better outcomes for the industry.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

Section C 1

BUSINESS OPERATING ENVIRONMENT
To improve Leadership and Management of the industry

Between 2000 and 2009, visitor levels to the Riverland fell by 26.8% and results are still declining as the following figures show. Results for 2010 declined by a further 9% to -35.8%

BIGGEST CONSTRAINT ON BETTER RESULTS
Since 2000, visitor numbers to Riverland down 35.8%

Many reasons for the downturn have been advanced but the following factors cannot be overlooked

1. Although results have been in decline and moreso in recent years, no strategies were launched to counter the downturn
2. No competitor analysis. At no level has there been a competitor analysis to discover why the Riverland was losing visitors to other destinations,
3. No awareness at all of the commercial importance of catering to the impulse buying market,
4. Until this project there has been a complete lack of awareness of the impact of technology especially the digital era,
5. No awareness of competitors using modern merchandising methods and new yield management practices to boost visitor numbers,
6. Awareness and appeal of the Riverland in key markets like Adelaide would be at a very low ebb. This situation would have been exacerbated by negative publicity associated with the drought and floods, yet no counter-measures were taken to counteract this serious problem,
7. No strategic marketing has been in place throughout the last decade, just occasional tactical advertising which has had little long term residual value
8. All marketing has been focussed on destination promotion with no targeted marketing to stimulate bookings
9. The Riverland Tourism Association has had limited resources and limited scope to fulfil its aims properly because of industry policy being decided in Adelaide and controlled from there,
10. Private sector stakeholders have had no scope to influence the development and execution of strategic destination marketing programs and policies for the Riverland but they have been expected to contribute to programs decided in Adelaide

Competitive situation

THE RIVERLAND HAS BEEN OPERATING AS IF IT IS THE 1990's. OUTSIDE SOUTH AUSTRALIA, OTHER COMMERCIAL INDUSTRIES HAVE EMBRACED THE DIGITAL ERA AS HAVE MANY OF RIVERLAND TOURISM'S COMPETITORS. INTRODUCTION OF DIGITAL MARKETING TOOLS TO LIFT RESULTS FOR DESTINATION MARKETING AND INDIVIDUAL TOURISM BUSINESSES IN THE RIVERLAND IS LONG OVERDUE.

THE PROBLEMS ABOVE HAVE BEEN CAUSED BECAUSE RIVERLAND DESTINATION MARKETING HAS NOT BEEN MANAGED BY EXPERIENCED PRIVATE SECTOR DESTINATION MARKETERS WITH SPECIALIST COMMERCIAL SKILLS AND EXPERTISE.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

TOURISM OPERATIONS WRONGLY SEEN AS “BEST PRACTICE”

After decades of public sector management of SA’s tourism industry at all levels the view has become so entrenched that current operational levels are regarded as industry “best practice” when this is far from correct.

Present marketing methods have long been superseded by Riverland’s competitors as falling visitor numbers attest. Present SA practices are:

- Out-of-date and far from being appropriate for the very competitive digital marketing era. The world has moved on but not SA,
- Tourism’s vital destination marketing has been seriously under-resourced with no modern destination marketing strategies, adequate staffing and appropriate budgets,
- The region is reactive not pro-active,
- The needs of private sector business performances have been completely ignored. Public sector policies prevail and there has been a complete lack of interest in the poor trading position of private sector businesses
- Public sector managed destination marketing structures have failed the industry. The private sector is not providing marketing funds for activities because they are not targeting visitors who would be possible customers for the Riverland visitor industry
- The public sector is not pro-business, it believes its function is to spend taxpayer funds on promoting the state, not to be used to boost the visitor economy by driving customers into tax paying private sector businesses that employ local people and buy local products and services.

Is it any wonder that visitor numbers have been falling so dramatically?

THIS PLAN IS COMPREHENSIVE AND DESIGNED TO HELP THE VISITOR ECONOMY OF THE REGION TO BECOME MORE PROSPEROUS. IT IS BASED ON WHERE THE RIVERLAND SHOULD BE HAD IT NOT BEEN IGNORED BY THE PUBLIC SECTOR SINCE 2000

RIVERLAND TOURISM INDUSTRY OPERATIONS FAR FROM “BEST PRACTICE”

Riverland tourism industry is following 1980s,1990s practices which are largely based on advertising and promotion. This is in sharp contrast to modern digital era practices which are business driven so that local visitor economies can benefit.

Around the world, the mission statement of most Destination Marketing Organisations is based on the tourism industry contributing to the Visitor Economy by making businesses more prosperous with growing visitor numbers. Such growth leads to increased spend across more businesses, not just tourism enterprises.

These are some example statements from destination marketing organisations around the world, shown below are the factors driving successful modern tourism destinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visit Bath</th>
<th>Bath Tourism Plus (BTP) is the official destination marketing organisation for Bath and the surrounding area. The company took over the management of tourism marketing from Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council in October 2003. It takes full responsibility for the marketing of Bath and the surrounding area to leisure and business travellers, PR activity to attract the nation’s top travel writers and overseas media, a conference and venues booking service, as well as the development of Bath’s official tourism internet site. <a href="http://www.visitbath.co.uk">www.visitbath.co.uk</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Visit Kent | Business Plan 2010-2015  
This is a summary of the Visit Kent Business Plan 2010-2015. It shows how the Visit Kent tourism organisation works closely with the private sector to maximise results |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Riverland Tourism Development Plan</strong> with sound marketing planning and wide use of 21st century digital era marketing practices.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visit Wiltshire</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit Wiltshire is committed to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Increasing the value and profitability of the visitor economy</strong> – our bottom line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Engaging with those involved in tourism</strong> – meeting the needs of key stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Raising the quality of the visitor experience – people’s expectations are constantly rising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yorkshire Tourism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire Tourism is the region's official tourism agency responsible for representing and helping to generate sustainable tourism for the region's tourism economy. Yorkshire Tourism’s mission statement reflects the very essence of the organisation “To represent and help generate sustainable business for the region’s tourism industry”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visit Chester and Cheshire</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will build our tourism industry to generate economic return for all – through our vision and passion positive action and effective partnership working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visit England</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To champion a successful, thriving tourism industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Destination Queenstown</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism New Zealand</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OUTCOME 2 - NEW ZEALAND’S TOURISM SECTOR IS PROSPEROUS AND ATTRACTS ONGOING INVESTMENT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our goals for the industry can only be realised if we can ensure continued profitability for those involved, and secure the investment required to continue upgrading our products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visit California</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The California Travel &amp; Tourism Commission (CTTC) is a non-profit organization with a mission to develop and maintain marketing programs - in partnership with the state’s travel industry - that keep California top-of-mind as a premier travel destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sacramento Tourism (Sacramento Convention and Visitors Bureau)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen the positive awareness of the City and County of Sacramento as a convention and visitor destination to increase revenues and stimulate economic development and growth for the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This mission statement charges the SCVB with driving demand for Sacramento area product(s) in the travel marketplace sufficient to create new revenues for businesses and increase sales tax and Transient Occupancy Tax for the city and county general funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>San Francisco Travel</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enhance the local economy by marketing San Francisco and the Bay Area as the premier destination for conventions, meetings, events and leisure travel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco Travel aggressively markets and sells San Francisco to attract visitors. The Association is a private, not-for-profit, 501(c)6 membership organization, headed by a Board of Directors made up of 45 business leaders from</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Riverland Tourism Development Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Mission/Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Niagara Falls Tourism</td>
<td>Niagara Falls Tourism Association is the official tourism marketing organization of the Community, responsible for developing public and private sector programs that produce incremental visitor business and resulting economic development returns for the City, its residents and the business community.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go Hawaii</td>
<td>The mission of the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau known to the public as Go Hawaii is to create sustainable, diversified, travel destination demand for the Hawaiian Islands. The strategic principles of innovation, integration, inclusion and accountability serve as the foundation of HVCB's marketing direction. HVCB is a private, non-profit, 501-C-6 Corporation. It is truly a public-private partnership: a marketing organization with visitor-industry and general business representation, government funding, Island Chapters for individual counties. It promotes leisure and business travel, including meetings and conventions, and acts as a catalyst for improving and expanding Hawaii's wide-ranging product offerings and experiences, while creating economic opportunities through tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination Washington</td>
<td>Destination Washington DC serves as the lead organization to successfully manage and market Washington, DC as a premier global convention, tourism and special events destination. By developing and executing centralized and cohesive sales and marketing strategies, Destination DC generates economic development for the city through tourism and meetings. In 2007, visitor spending exceeded $5.5 billion, representing $620 million in new tax dollars for the District of Columbia. Destination DC is a private, non-profit corporation with a membership of more than 1,000 businesses and organizations that support the DC travel and tourism sector. A contracting arm of the Washington Convention Center Authority, the organization is funded by a percentage of DC's hotel occupancy tax, along with membership dues and co-operative marketing fees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Alberta</td>
<td>Grow tourism revenues with compelling invitations to experience Alberta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Calgary</td>
<td>Tourism Calgary is Calgary’s destination marketing organization. Representing the tourism industry, and more than 540 members, we bring the world to Calgary and Calgary to the world for meetings &amp; conventions, leisure travel, and sport, culture and major events. Tourism in Calgary annually contributes over $1.1 billion in economic impact to the community. Operating as a not-for-profit organization, we are the authoritative source for tourism related knowledge, information and services in Calgary. We are a sales and marketing organization, focused on promoting and selling Calgary as a destination of choice for leisure and business travel, and an outstanding host city of sport and culture events. We provide information, assistance and support to meeting planners and the convention industry, leisure travel trade and tour operators, individual visitors, and the worldwide news media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Toronto</td>
<td>Tourism Toronto is the official destination marketing organization for Toronto's tourism industry. Tourism Toronto (a.k.a. Toronto Convention and Visitors Association) focuses on promoting and selling the greater Toronto region as</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

a remarkable destination for tourists, convention delegates and business travellers. Officially operating as a not-for-profit agency, Tourism Toronto has over 1,200 members and is a partnership of public and private sectors.

Destination marketing organisations around the world are now business driven. It is only some State Tourism Organisations in Australia who are holding firm to outdated 20th century practices.

SATC CONTRIBUTION TO VISITOR NUMBERS

The South Australian Tourism Plan 2009-2014 Performance Summary 2009 states

*The South Australian Strategic Plan target (T1.15) is to “increase visitor expenditure in South Australia’s tourism industry from $3.7 Billion in 2002 to $6.3 billion by 2014”*

To achieve the 2014 target requires 6 per cent per annum average growth. The State and the South Australian tourism industry aim to close this gap by increasing visitor numbers and length of stay, and more importantly, increasing visitor spend. This is certainly a bold target that we are aiming for.

As for increasing visitor numbers, TRA National Visitor Survey statistics show that visitor numbers to South Australia since 2000 have performed poorly as follows

The chart above shows that SA’s destination marketing during the nation’s greatest ever economic boom. Flat results were delivered for Adelaide and a decline for Regional SA with the Riverland suffering a 26.8% fall in visitors between 2000 and 2008. Every other commercial industry reported huge growth results during this time but not the SA tourism industry under public sector management.

Domestic overnight visitors 2000-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>% Var 00 cf 08</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adel</td>
<td>2419</td>
<td>2286</td>
<td>2241</td>
<td>2186</td>
<td>2436</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2199</td>
<td>2247</td>
<td>2117</td>
<td>-14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg SA</td>
<td>3714</td>
<td>3525</td>
<td>3556</td>
<td>3537</td>
<td>3666</td>
<td>3245</td>
<td>3318</td>
<td>3386</td>
<td>3115</td>
<td>-20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rland</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>-26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5862</td>
<td>5529</td>
<td>5544</td>
<td>5122</td>
<td>5796</td>
<td>5005</td>
<td>5292</td>
<td>5414</td>
<td>4990</td>
<td>-19.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism Research Australia

Domestic overnight visitors 2000-2010

Since the boom period when Australia’s domestic tourism industry was hit by the Global Financial Crisis. Australians still went overseas in growing numbers but visitor numbers to SA
deteriorated further. There were no initiatives to stimulate demand. By comparison, Tourism New Zealand convened a meeting with the private sector to see how government and the private sector could work together to counter the downturn but there was no similar action taken in SA. Meanwhile, New Zealand took the important steps below to protect their growing Australian market

- Tourism New Zealand’s unspent funds in the Australian marketing budget for 2009/10 were brought forward to be spent from soon after the GFC hit until they ran out about late February,
- To cover the remainder of the financial year, the NZ Government provided an extra $2.5 Million which was matched by Air New Zealand providing Tourism New Zealand in Australia with $5 million to maintain momentum of demand. This maintained the growth of Australians going to NZ
- Funds were also made available by the NZ Government through NZ Tourism Industry Association (NZTIA) for Regional Tourism Organisations on a $1 for $1 basis to develop their own marketing plans in Australia
- Independent of all this, private sector managed Destination Queenstown acting in accordance with the wishes of their members, asked the Queenstown Council to levy the business community with a special levy to raise $1 million in addition to the normal annual levy. Some of this was used to access the $1 for $1 scheme available through NZTIA. Destination Queenstown used the levy funds to launch an Australian program to protect their visitor numbers and they were successful with no drop in arrivals.

**Domestic overnight visitors 2000-2010**

Between 2000 and 2010, the Riverland was hit very hard but there were no counter-measures launched.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>% Var 00 cf 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>2419</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>-21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg SA</td>
<td>3714</td>
<td>2683</td>
<td>-27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverland</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>-35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5862</td>
<td>4585</td>
<td>-21.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism Research Australia

The crisis for the Riverland has progressively become worse.
WORKING WITH OTHER SECTORS

Tourism is part of the wider Visitor Industry

Often overlooked, as is the current situation in the Riverland, is that tourism’s success is closely linked with success in other sectors within the visitor industry such as

- Food and wine,
- Golf,
- Events,
- Motor sports,
- Other sports,
- Retailing.

All of these sectors benefit from a more buoyant tourism industry and vice-versa. They also play an important part in attracting visitors to the Riverland, some generating repeat visitation.

Presently, there is considerable consternation caused by a lack of a central forum to

- Coordinate the events calendar to avoid events coinciding thereby putting an undue strain on accommodation and other local resources. This also adversely affects attendances at some events,
- Be able to represent the consolidated needs of their sector to Councils and others,
- Pool resources for mutual advantage and so produce better results
- Learn from each other about possible solutions to operating problems

It is proposed that a Riverland Visitor Council be formed, an informal group hosted by Destination Riverland, to meet quarterly to discuss coming events and to review any cooperation that may offer opportunities for tourism to assist local groups to attract more visitors to local events.

Funding by Councils for events

Mildura City Council has a very successful system which has been in operation for many years. Applications are submitted to Council by set dates each year, they are assessed and Council then decides what funding, if any, the event will receive.

Most applications are vetted for their contribution to the local economy particularly tourism. After the event, the event organisers are required to submit details of visitor numbers and other data. This can have an impact on Council’s decision on the following year should they apply again.

It is recommended that the Riverland Councils consider this system to help the local visitor industry. See also Attachment E.

Marketing assistance for events

While Destination Riverland will not have the resources to undertake the marketing plan for any particular event, it should be very pleased to provide advice to help the organisers and perhaps use the PR consultant to provide some media coverage in markets away from the Riverland.

Destination Riverland would also be able to introduce event organisers to tourism businesses that would be prepared to make special offers for visitors like packages for accommodation, special offers for restaurants or special entry prices for attractions.
RESEARCH
and Regional Visitor Monitor

USING RESEARCH FOR BETTER MARKETING RESULTS

Regional tourism has long overlooked use of reliable research for marketing planning

The Riverland’s visitor numbers are in poor shape because there has been no research to guide destination marketing decisions.

The SATC has access to much valuable research information but this doesn’t always get out to regions. In addition to Tourism Research Australia data, other statistical information held by SATC includes

- SATC sponsored research information,
- Roy Morgan tracking research for holidays

Destination Riverland should seek an arrangement with SATC to receive this information as it becomes available.

Improved decision making with relevant research

Very few decisions affecting Riverland tourism results are being made using research findings. Had use of relevant research been a standard practice and properly targeted destination marketing undertaken, the poor results now being experienced by the Riverland visitor industry could have been avoided.

Research that would be beneficial for the Riverland in the immediate future would be market demand research in the Adelaide market to measure

- Level of awareness as to what the Riverland has to offer and the most popular features that would attract visitors to the region,
- Level of interest in visiting the region by comparison with other parts of SA and interstate locations
- How travellers learn more about places they plan to visit including the Riverland and other regional destinations,
- How they would book their travel.

Digital marketing technology

If the Riverland had its own digital marketing technology, the region would be able to conduct some market demand studies economically and in-house. Other surveys they could undertake on a very economical basis would include

- Visitor Satisfaction Surveys on a periodic basis to measure trends
- Industry surveys on topical issues.

It is quite amazing how digital technology can be used to improve business performances and so economically too.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

BUSINESS BAROMETER / REGIONAL VISITOR MONITOR

Six weeks after the end of each month, Visit Kent issues it’s Business Barometer. It is a monthly snapshot of tourism business performance in Kent. Over 50 attractions, 200 accommodation providers, 20 conference venues, 5 cross channel carriers and 16 Visitor Information Centres submit their figures to Visit Kent on a confidential basis. This confidentiality also enables businesses to report on the issues affecting their results allowing them to benchmark and also to react quickly to market conditions.

A copy of the July 2011 edition of the Kent Business Barometer can be found at www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk/library/Business_Barometer_July_2011.pdf
Earlier Kent Business Barometers can be seen on the Visit Kent Business website.

Riverland Visitor Monitor

While it is not proposed that a Business Barometer be established for the Riverland, it is proposed that a Riverland Visitor Monitor be established on a quarterly basis. The information provided would be a

- A great help to tourism businesses to be able to measure their business results against the industry’s aggregate results
- Very welcome with potential investors who may be interested in buying a tourism business or are considering developing a new business in the Riverland.

Presently many tourism businesses are having trouble attracting interest from potential investors. Many potential buyers cannot show interest because the banks and venture capital sources will not consider lending for tourism enterprises, Having a Regional Visitor Monitor would be a first step to overcoming this problem.

It is possible that the local office of Regional Development Australia would be interested in assisting with the Monitor’s production because both their organisation and Destination Riverland would find the information of value.

Examples of what the Regional Visitor Monitor could contain would be

- National Visitor Survey information,
- International Visitor Survey information,
- ABS Accommodation statistics,
- SATC research information,
- Aggregate statistics about local industry performance like accommodation results with average occupancies for each group, houseboat hires averaged over the group, attractions visitors, etc
- Destination website data like hits, different types of website visitors, etc,
- Online booking system statistics,
- Visitor Information Centre statistics.

Additionally, it is desired to report in the quarterly Regional Visitor Monitor, details of any factors that have been affecting results or are likely to impact on future results.
Throughout this plan, two terms are often used to describe the same organisational function

- Regional Tourism Organisation, and
- Destination Marketing Organisation

Regional Tourism Organisations, as a cooperative of industry businesses are usually private sector managed and act to ensure the destination is competitive with all other destinations. The major function of all Destination Marketing Organisations is to work with their industry members to deliver effective destination marketing programs.

**REGIONAL DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANISATIONS**

Tourism is a commercial industry, not a government department. Around the world, the operating structures of Regional Destination Marketing Organisations follow a basic structure which is very similar to most private sector commercial organisations. Shown below is a structure based on functions. Larger organisations split these functions over several executives as needed.

**ROLES OF DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANISATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional DMOs</th>
<th>Regional Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) in Australia and overseas, known as Regional Tourism Organisations, are the front line of regional destination marketing. It is these organisations that, working with their industry stakeholders, secure the customers (visitors) for local businesses. They in turn, are the base revenue collectors for the Visitor Economy.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State/Province DMOs</td>
<td>These DMOs focus on supporting the regional DMOs with whatever support they can provide including extra funds for destination marketing campaigns. They also have a role in managing ongoing industry development including exploiting commercial and technology opportunities. Their other responsibility is to coordinate the marketing in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Regional DMO’s**

- **Product infrastructure**

  overseas countries for their State/Province.

  It is very unusual to find State/Province DMOs are involved in day-to-day operational management of Regional DMOs as is the SATC practice.

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**Hong Kong**

In Hong Kong there are two tourism organisations. **Hong Kong Tourism Commission** is a government department responsible for product development and investor servicing. **Hong Kong Tourism Association** has a private sector organisation managing all destination marketing.

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**ROLES OF STATE TOURISM ORGANISATIONS**

It is normal for State/Province Tourism Organisations around the world to have a different role to Regional Tourism Organisations. Usually for State/Province Tourism Organisations to perform these functions:

- Focus on development of the state-wide tourism industry with forward planning, monitoring trends and providing research about market trends
- Provide regions with extra resources for their locally developed major campaigns,
- Develop new markets for the state
- Keep abreast of technology advances and helping regions to adopt it,
- Perform a coordination role on cross border issues affecting regions,
- Coordinate the development of regional marketing in others states and overseas

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**Visit California**

Shown below is a summary of the Mission, Vision, Goal and Guiding Principles of Visit California (California Travel and Tourism Commission – CTTC). This is indicative of standard practice of State Tourism Organisations around the world. SATC has a different approach.

**Mission**

The mission of CTTC, in partnership with the State Government and tourism industry, is to promote California as one of the world’s premier travel destinations, in order to increase revenue and tourism employment within California.

**Vision**

CTTC will be the recognized source for state-wide marketing planning and in partnership with the State Government and tourism industry, for state-wide marketing planning and implementation, information and support to California’s vast travel and tourism industry, thereby maintaining California’s position as one of the world’s pre-eminent travel and tourism destinations.

**Goal**

CTTC will act as a catalyst to increase travel spending and tourism employment in California.

**Market impact of Tourism**

The CTTC serves the state and its residents by supporting, maintaining and increasing domestic and international inbound travel to California for the purpose of increasing visitor spending, tax revenues and employment opportunities.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

With this new Five-Year Strategic Marketing Plan (Brand Enrichment), CTTC has slightly adjusted its guiding principles below to include consistent and potent brand mentions, especially when focusing on out-of-state resources, as well as accelerating our Web leadership. It also...
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

incorporates core international program strategies from the U.S. Travel Association and the new Promotion Corporation for Travel Promotion

1. Do what the industry cannot do for itself.
CTTC will provide a state-wide marketing platform to promote the California brand.

2. Leverage existing assets and alliances; focus on international and emerging market development.
CTTC will introduce the California brand to far-reaching audiences and establish strategic alliances with trusted in-market brands.

3. Evaluate program measures and return on investment (ROI) for major programs.
CTTC will track and evaluate market penetration and program impact on attracting leisure travellers.

4. Focus on out-of-state and international audiences to build and refine the California brand.
CTTC marketing programs will serve to attract new consumers to California through the power of the California brand, while providing industry partners with opportunities to reach new markets that are otherwise cost-prohibitive.

5. Support assessed businesses. CTTC will be a resource for assessed (AU term - accredited) tourism businesses by providing marketing opportunities, Web leadership and tourism research material vital to the success of their operations.

6. Accelerate Web leadership.
CTTC will increase its status as a leader in the Web and interactive world by creating innovative programs to reach consumers with targeted, timely and cost-effective brand messages.

7. Align with CVBs, DMOs and U.S. Travel leadership.
CTTC will coordinate resources with local destination marketing organizations (DMOs), while aligning with efforts on the national level.

CORE OBJECTIVES
The Five-Year Strategic Marketing Plan’s new strategic framework builds on the guiding principle and travel environment, focusing efforts on four key objectives and corresponding strategies:

(1) Expand state-wide marketing platform,
(2) Enrich the brand quality,
(3) Deepen consumer engagement,
(4) Grow international visitation and spend

The strategies were developed by integrating refinements from the previous plan with industry feedback.

Within California, there are numerous RTOs like San Diego, Los Angeles, Monterey, San Francisco, Sacramento and others. While California is much larger than South Australia, the principles are the same for both states as well as provinces in Canada, counties in UK and in many other countries.
NEW REGIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION

Destination Riverland

MODERN NAME FOR NEW REGIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION

To signal the introduction of a new Regional Tourism Organisation for the Riverland and being under private sector management, Destination Riverland is a new name adopted in line with the modern trends..

The new NSW Government has just passed legislation which changes Tourism NSW from being a government department to a new autonomous private sector managed statutory tourism authority. The RTO for one of NZ’s top tourism destinations is titled Destination Queenstown. As the trend to change tourism organisations over to private sector management gathers pace, it is forecast that the prefix “Destination” will replace “Tourism” as it is already becoming widespread.

By adopting the name Destination Riverland at this time, it gives the region a point of difference with other regions which can only serve to raise awareness of the region.

GOAL

The Goal for this plan is to develop a strong professional and profitable industry

Shown below is Goal 4 from a previous SATC Tourism Plan, a Goal which was not achieved and neither was it included in the current SATC Tourism Plan 2009-2014

Tourism is a comparatively young and largely fragmented industry comprising most small businesses. To improve competitiveness and sustainable outcomes, communities and individual businesses have to access superior resources, capabilities and competences.

To improve the industry’s competitiveness and sustainability, Government will consider supporting the tourism industry where ‘market failure’ exists, in certain circumstances and where justified. It will do this to help make the industry more profitable, professional and self-reliant.

Providing sound research for better decision-making; improving existing business practices; encouraging the adoption of new productive technology, new entrants and continuous learning through training; and improving risk management approaches are key needs that will be addressed.

AIM OF THIS PLAN FOR THE RIVERLAND’S VISITOR INDUSTRY

This plan has three phases over the next three years and is designed to import experienced, proven tourism industry managers and marketers from interstate or New Zealand to provide the leadership and management to fulfil three important functions

(1) Restore Riverland destination marketing to a competitive level appropriate for 21st century tourism digital marketing,

(2) Help individual tourism businesses to move from their current 1990s marketing level to the digital era so they can tap into new business opportunities to restore growth and prosperity

(3) By 2015, put the Riverland tourism industry and its members in a strong position to be able to suit the ongoing needs of the industry and prevailing competitive situation at that time. By then it is expected some functions of Destination Riverland’s structure will be amalgamated or modernised and/or outsourced. But the most important element will be that Destination Riverland will be able to provide competitive sound destination marketing on an ongoing basis for the Riverland industry.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

This proposed restructure uses the same commercial principles as companies like Woolworths, Coca-cola, Bunnings, Sealink and many other successful commercial operations.

**PLAN ADVOCATES ADOPTING A STRUCTURE IN USE AROUND THE WORLD**

This plan advocates adopting a Regional Tourism Organisation structure now in practice in Queensland, New Zealand, North America, UK and other countries around the world.

It is a proven structure which is delivering positive rewards around the world and is based on the Regional Tourism Organisation operating independently with the private sector managing its own commercial operations.

Under private sector management, the new Regional Tourism Organisation, Destination Riverland, is proposed to operate as a private sector managed business unit.

**FUTURE OF RIVERLAND DESTINATION MARKETING**

Transition to this new structure will see Destination Riverland becoming more commercially driven. Once this happens, private sector management will be able to use

- Modern business methods, and
- Peer pressure

to enlist far more support from the private sector for destination marketing with more cash and in kind contributions for destination marketing campaigns. **THIS IS SOMETHING PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE.**

**HAVING A BUSINESS ETHOS HELPS FUNDING FOR DESTINATION MARKETING**

One of the aims of this restructure must be to develop a long term goal of lessening reliance on public sector funding. New Zealand has been able to do it, why not Riverland? New Zealand is able to do it because their Regional Tourism Organisation operations are private sector managed independent of public sector controls and have a strong business ethos. Similar situations exist in Queensland. NT, UK, Canada and USA.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL DMO’s**

Study successful Destination Marketing Organisations (in regions currently known as Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) and they usually have these characteristics

- A Board of senior experienced, proven business and tourism executives chosen for their business expertise,
- A very capable CEO and other senior executives with a background in tourism management and marketing along with a track record of being able to develop successful marketing which targets business outcomes,
- The DMO operates as a business unit,
- The DMO structures all operations to deliver what the industry wants, growing visitor numbers who become customers for their businesses,
- Destination marketing strategies are developed that best deliver business for industry stakeholders with financial rewards for the DMO from the results produced,
- Incomes are earned from marketing activities, commissions, transaction fees and other business opportunities
- Where necessary, they use peer group pressure to gain additional support from major stakeholders and industry partners for key projects. The public sector is in no position to pursue this support,
- Can enter into arrangements with allied activities like an e-shop to attract more local product sales for the destination thereby earning income for the RTO,
- Can seek cash and kind sponsorships,
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

- Can lobby for additional support from governments. The public sector is not able to press in the same way that the private sector can do.

and most important of all

- Can use the private sector’s natural abilities to use entrepreneurial flair, innovative skills, initiative and business acumen to launch bold moves to lift the operational performance of commercial activities of both destination marketing and individual tourism businesses. THE PUBLIC SECTOR IS UNABLE TO DO THIS AS RECENT HISTORY SHOWS.

NEGOTIATING SKILLS

An important part of commercial activities is the ability to negotiate.

When the public sector negotiates on behalf of tourism’s private sector, being part of the political system, they are compromised particularly where inter-governmental relations are involved.

By comparison the private sector with its integral negotiating skills is not bound by political constraints and can negotiate on a B2G basis. Also the private sector can be very “business-like” with Ministers, Government bureaucrats and Councils. Again the public sector does not have the same flexibility.

When it comes to negotiating for business opportunities with clients, public sector representatives do not have the commercial knowledge to be able to negotiate successfully particularly when challenged by “wheeling and dealing” for business.

ACCOUNTABILITY

All private sector managed Destination Marketing Organisations (RTOs) are accountable for

- Measurable outcomes, and
- Being pro-active with responses with initiatives to capture business opportunities or counter downturns or other set-backs

These are functions not being seen coming from the public sector DMOs in SA.

Business opportunities

Private sector managed Destination Marketing Organisations are

- Always alert for business and publicity opportunities, and
- Are proactive with responding with initiatives to capture opportunities and counter set backs.

These are not functions public sector managed DMOs are able to deliver but they are so important to the commercial performance of tourism businesses.

“The bottom line”

The bottom line is that with public sector management there has been an absence of properly resourced regional Destination Marketing Organisations including Riverland Tourism Association, this has been preventing better commercial results being produced for the industry.

There is no way that the Riverland tourism industry results can be rejuvenated while the public sector continues to be involved in Riverland destination marketing operations as this limits the commercial activities being undertaken at the necessary competitive level.
In Tasmania there has recently been a controversy about the failure of the public sector managed Tourism Tasmania caused by the failure of the State Tourism Organisation. It has been delivering a poor commercial performance for the private sector preferring to focus only on promoting the state. Tourism Tasmania has been ignoring the urgent needs of more customers for private sector businesses suffering depressed results.

The Tasmanian Government has now appointed a new Tourism Board Chairman and a new CEO for Tourism Tasmania, both coming from Tourism NT and with private sector backgrounds.

Released in May 2011 was a report from a Tasmanian Legislative Council Select Committee about the state of the Tasmanian tourism industry. During their hearings the Committee went to New Zealand to study how tourism organisations operate at national and regional levels. Shown below is a summary of their recommendation to take Tourism Tasmania out of the public service and place under private sector management.

This, together with the significant changes in NSW, indicate that the industry is moving to more business driven structures like this proposal for Destination Riverland.

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**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE**  
**TOURISM IN TASMANIA**  
**Extracts from Chairman’s Foreword and Executive Summary**  
**Released Wednesday 4th May 2011**

A Tasmanian Legislative Council Select Committee reviewing the operation of the Tasmanian tourism Industry handed down their report recently which included findings from a visit to New Zealand to examine their tourism industry operations.

Extracts from the final report are listed below. For the word “Tasmania” by inserting “South Australia”, the findings will apply equally in this state. The performance of Tourism Tasmania is on a par with the South Australian Tourism Commission.

New Zealand is recognised as a leader in tourism and this Committee has benefited considerably from the information obtained by the three Members who visited that country in February.

The importance New Zealand places on tourism as an economic driver is reinforced by the fact that the Prime Minister is also the Minister of Tourism.

A culture exists throughout New Zealand of widespread individual and community support for the industry. Local government provides generous funding for promotion. As a result tourism ranks with the dairy industry as the two leading industries in New Zealand.

A feature of their tourism organisational structure is the fact that Tourism New Zealand is a marketing body governed by a Board comprising only private enterprise members with no representative from the Government bureaucracy.

Tasmania would benefit by adopting a similar model because, freed of expensive bureaucratic requirements, more funds would be available for marketing and promotion.

The Committee shares the views of those witnesses who expressed concern that Tourism Tasmania is within the State’s public service bureaucracy. Those holding that view believe that...
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

this constrains Tourism Tasmania from marketing the tourist potential of this State to the fullest extent.

There is strong support for removing Tourism Tasmania from the public service and establishing it as a marketing body, similar to the system which exists and operates so effectively in New Zealand. Recommendations of the Select Committee on this matter were

1. The current structure of Tourism Tasmania within the State bureaucracy inhibits its capacity to respond quickly to changing markets and to maximise the tourism potential of Tasmania.

2. The Tasmanian Government separates Tourism Tasmania from the State bureaucracy to enable it to operate independently and solely as a marketing company similar to Tourism New Zealand.

3. The Tasmanian Government establishes a Tourism Policy and Research Unit within the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts to provide tourism policy advice and research support to the State Government similar to the manner in which the Tourism Strategy Unit operates within the Ministry of Economic Development in New Zealand.

In providing its strong support for this proposal, the Committee believes that the available funds for tourism in this State would be more effectively utilised if this change were made.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

Section C 6

DESTINATION RIVERLAND

Proposed structure

This proposed new structure is based on standard industry practice in Queensland, Northern Territory, other states, New Zealand and other countries. It is to be private sector managed with a business ethos striving to deliver a strong, growing, competitive and prosperous private sector contributing to the region’s visitor economy.

Two important parts of this proposed new structure for the next three years are

- To deliver successful tactical marketing initiatives in the short term to boost cash flows for Riverland tourism businesses, many being under considerable pressure from low demand levels over recent years, and
- To restructure industry operations to put the industry in a strong long term sustainable position. To avoid returning to the present depressed conditions, this plan involves well planned long term marketing strategies. This entails equipping both the DMO and individual businesses with the skills and resources to embrace new digital marketing methods

THIS PLAN FOR RIVERLAND TOURISM IS FAR FROM BEING ABOUT THROWING FUNDS AT SHORT TERM TACTICAL CAMPAIGNS WHICH HAVE NO LONG TERM VALUE. IT IS A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY

ANOTHER FEATURE OF THIS PLAN AIMS TO BOOST THE VISITOR ECONOMY OVERALL. THIS WILL MEAN TOURISM RIVERLAND WORKING MORE CLOSELY WITH OTHER VISITOR INDUSTRY SECTORS e.g. Food and Wine, Events, Golf, Motor Sports, Retailers, etc SO THERE CAN BE MUTUAL COMMERCIAL BENEFITS. THIS PLAN HAS WIDER OBJECTIVES TO BENEFIT THE WHOLE REGION, NOT JUST TOURISM.

OTHER IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF THIS PLAN

Vision

The vision is that by 2015, the Riverland tourism industry will be making a far bigger contribution to the Riverland economy through a strong, growing, competitive and prosperous tourism industry private sector working cooperatively with other sectors of the visitor industry. This will be the basis to ensure an ongoing and sustainable tourism industry for the years ahead.

Mission

To build the value of the tourism industry to the economy of the Riverland both in the immediate future and in the long term.

Outsourcing and job sharing

There is a growing trend in regional tourism for use of outsourcing and job sharing for cost/effective marketing operations.

This plan is designed with two periods in mind

- Rejuvenating the industry over the next three years by importing a team of experienced managers to impart their knowledge and expertise to rejuvenate results for the wider Riverland tourism industry. During this time the aim is also to build an effective DMO plus help individual tourism businesses to become more profitable, and
- At the end of this period to have Destination Riverland able to face the challenges of the next era from a sound operating position. New operating factors by 2015 which will be better managed by a leaner more effective business operation.
There is no doubt that outsourcing and job sharing will be part of this new era particularly as the management structure will needed to be pared back also.

**DESTINATION RIVERLAND ORGANISATION CHART**

The organisation chart for the Destination Marketing Organisation is proposed as follows

Following standard international practice, relationship with the State Tourism Organisation, SATC, will be on the basis that Destination Riverland will be an independent, private sector autonomous Regional Tourism Organisation. Destination Riverland will need to cooperate with the other sectors so they support each other's programs.
### FUNCTIONS OF KEY APPOINTMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appointment</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Tourism Board**            | To comprise a Chairman and eight well regarded and accomplished members bringing to the Board, experiences and expertise in business and commercial tourism operations particularly with skills in:  
- Strategic business management,  
- Strategic tourism marketing, not just tactical and operational backgrounds  
- Desirably good knowledge of government operations, plus  
- A representative of the Riverland Councils.  
  
For the first 2-3 years, one Board member needs to come from the travel industry in a key market area of the Riverland. Someone of the ilk of Phil Hoffman of Phil Hoffman Travel in Adelaide would be good value.  
  
The Chairman needs to be chosen for his/her senior business background and with the expertise to successfully guide the development of a new organisation.  
  
The Board needs to be chosen for business skills, not by popular vote and not on a representation basis. The organisation in its early days needs the best business guidance that it can get.  
  
It will be necessary to consider paying fees and reimbursement of travelling costs for the Board member from outside the region. |
| **Chief Executive Officer** | To be appointed by the Board from outside SA, the CEO should bring to the position strong commercial experience with good leadership and management credentials and a track record in successful competitive tourism operations.  
  
His/her functions will be to  
- Carry out the policies of the Board and manage the organisation’s operations ensuring that annual business objectives are achieved,  
- Manage the strategic direction of the organisation,  
- React to business opportunities and threats,  
- Monitor and assist departmental managers and their activities,  
  
Maintain close links with government and commercial organisations important to the organisation’s operations. |
| **Sales & Marketing Manager** | Needs to come from outside SA with a successful senior industry private sector background in all aspects of sales and marketing in both traditional and digital marketing. Should have first hand knowledge of competitive standard mechanising methods and modern pricing policies.  
  
Also needs to have a sound knowledge of working with the travel industry and digital era distribution channels. |
| **IT Marketing Manager**     | Needs to come from outside SA with first hand market knowledge of all digital marketing developments, websites, online booking systems and emerging new technologies and Destination Management Systems.  
  
Desirably, should have good skills in working with tourism businesses to achieve their involvement in adopting modern IT systems to help their businesses  
  
This appointment is not about IT systems, it is about IT marketing and there is a big difference. |


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Operations Manager</td>
<td>A local appointment responsible for working closely with industry members in regard to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Working with the region’s VICs giving them every support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Maintaining destination website presentations for accuracy,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Monitor online booking system,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Supporting marketing activities with online systems and digital marketing activities,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Production of collateral material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Membership liaison and support coordination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration and Finance Manager</td>
<td>A local appointment to manage day-to-day administration support and financial management. Another important function will be to support the Board and act as Company Secretary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### OUTSOURCING

There are several areas where outsourcing is proposed
- PR consultancy,
- IT support,
- Photo Library,
- Collateral support,
- E-Shop.

### PR consultancy

Riverland’s poor level of destination awareness is largely due to an absence of
- Favourable publicity for the region associated with a destination awareness program, and
- The recent adverse publicity being at a high level.

Other commercial operations retain a PR consultancy who works to avoid adverse publicity occurring and if it does occur is able to react quickly. Modern tourism marketing has a high element of pro-active PR and publicity activity. For the Riverland there has been none at all.

It is proposed that Destination Riverland retain a PR consultancy as outlined in Section C7

**PR IS MAJOR MODERN ERA MARKETING NEED NOT TO BE OVERLOOKED**

Further details are shown in Section C 7

### IT support

The IT Marketing Manager will need to work directly with industry members and will need technical support for implementation activities which is likely to be extensive over a long period.

Discover Murray, a well regarded, successful SA company is already closely linked with many tourism businesses in Riverland tourism marketing and knows the region well. Discover Murray has kindly assisted development of this plan by providing the design for the proposed destination website home page and the mock-up for the home page of the proposed Houseboats Holidays brochure. Discover Murray should be invited to make a presentation to the Destination Riverland Board.
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The IT support which will be needed to cover a wide range of activities that do not exist in the Riverland presently. This includes social media and Destination Management Systems which are all part of success in the modern era. An IT specialist will be needed to support the implementation function which is shown in greater detail in a comprehensive proposal from Discover Murray shown in Funding Section C 9. Discover Murray would be able to assist Destination Riverland with this plan.

Photo Library

Most Destination Marketing Organisations believe they can save money by managing the Images Library in-house only to discover later that expensive and very valuable images have not been stored properly or even lost. Not to have them in catalogue order can be very burdensome when responding to media and trade requests for images.

For this reason, it is proposed that this important function be outsourced to a local professional for management and prompt responses to requests for images from media and trade.

Collateral support

Both for traditional and digital marketing there will be an ongoing need for professional support for production of brochures, sales promotion leaflets and other material in hard copy format and in a format suitable for downloading from the destination website.

That’s Graphic, a brochure designer at Loxton has kindly assisted with estimates for producing the
- 101 Holiday Ideas brochure, and the
- Houseboat Holidays brochure.
Details are included in Funding Section C 9

That’s Graphic, Loxton, has many clients in the Riverland and is well regarded for the brochures they produce and would be available to assist Destination Riverland.

E-Shop

This new feature for the Riverland destination website is designed to serve two purposes
- To promote the wide array of food, wine and other products produced in the Riverland, and
- To offer facilities to purchase online or in person when visiting the Riverland.

This is another way for tourism to contribute to the Visitor Economy and at the same time
- Help to enhance the appeal of the Riverland as a destination, and
- Contribute to Destination Riverland budgets.

HELPING TOURISM BUSINESSES

An important element of this plan is to provide assistance to tourism businesses to help them restore their enterprise to healthy and prosperous levels again. It is the small businesses of the region that collect the revenues that flow into the Visitor Economy.

It is the aim of this plan to introduce new business to industry stakeholders by
- Lifting revenues and cash flows as quickly as possible,
- Maximising online booking facilities and be linked to channel management systems,
- Revamping market communication skills and increase use of modern merchandising methods,
- Adopting modern yield management practices to lift profits,

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- Helping them to tap into new market segments,
- Providing marketing ideas as to how they can combat seasonality,
- Fostering greater use of cross promotion to benefit retailers, attractions, tours, cruises and others,
- Helping to achieve greater exposure in third party distribution channels,
- Production of regular e-newsletters to stimulate demand, particularly for “soft” periods
- Including more tourism businesses in destination marketing campaigns developed by Destination Riverland and others.

**DESTINATION RIVERLAND MANAGEMENT SALARIES**

One of the serious constraints on a better commercial performance by SA’s tourism industry is the difference in attitude by the public and private sectors towards salary arrangements for tourism management positions.

Because the SA tourism industry is closely managed by the public sector, it treats the industry as if it is a government department at all levels. Salaries for tourism management positions are aligned to public service pay scales instead of their commercial roles which attract higher salaries in the private sector. This means most vacancies are only of interest to applicants with a public service background.

Such salary offers are usually not attractive to experienced tourism industry personnel with a business background because the salary is not attractive enough. Industry results have suffered because this policy is a key factor behind visitor levels being in such a severe decline.

Private sector organisations have an entirely different attitude. Salary levels are set to attract candidates that will produce the best commercial results for the organisation. This calls for people with drive, vision, are results orientated and have a strong business ethos. This category of person is not usually found in the public sector. To recruit these people, the private sector offers salaries in keeping with their commercial value. Destination Riverland needs to be competitive with salary packages appropriate for the economic value they are expected to deliver, not by some administrative criteria.

At the tourism industry briefing at Berri on 29th March, Advance Tourism outlined then salary levels needed to attract suitable candidates to the Destination Riverland management appointments. These were at a far higher level than current practice in regional SA.

**LONG TERM FUTURE OF RIVERLAND TOURISM**

What should happen with Destination Riverland is very much linked to the way that the industry is trending. On emerging trends, within five years, Destination Riverland will need to consider becoming a non-profit company limited by guarantee owned by the industry and perhaps the Riverland Councils. All businesses large and small would need to be invited to buy debentures in their company. Funds raised would be held by the company until

1. They are sold with the business to new owners, or
2. Sold back to Destination Riverland by any business ceasing operation.

There are signs that destinations where the public sector has control of destination marketing, competitors to the official destination marketing organisation have opened up their own website which they are entitled to do. What happens then is that they siphon off support from the official DMO website which then loses some of its base income which funds marketing of the destination. Councils then have to find increased Council funding support if the destination is not to lose its appeal.
Around regional Australia today there are a number of destinations where competitors are moving in with good SEO (search engine optimisation) and the consumer is then faced with:

- Several destination websites, each incomplete in terms of information and products available. The products shown are only a small percentage of all products available, and
- The official destination website is not always easily recognised nor offering a complete service.

Destinations under strong private sector management don’t have the same problem because they can use peer pressure and business acumen to counter any predatory competitive activity. Public sector managed destinations cannot launch such counter-measures for several reasons particularly political repercussions.

Another factor emerging now, mainly overseas at this time, is that with technology advances, similar competition is threatening the operation of official destination websites. To counter this competition, destination marketing organisations need to have their members agreeing not to work with these predators who are only interested in their own bottom line and not working to market the destination for the industry as a whole.
PR PUBLICITY SUPPORT

Continuity of publicity is essential

Marketing plans for most successful commercial organisations regard ongoing Public Relations and Publicity as very important. They are based on

- The organisation’s strategic and marketing plans, and
- The need to be able to manage unwanted publicity like this

Presently the value and role of PR and publicity is not recognised by regional marketing plans prepared in SA apart from seeking to get editorial coverage through SATC

SATC has a PR unit in Adelaide which performs very well. It’s main roles are mainly to

- Obtain publicity opportunities that promote SA, and
- Produce media releases for SATC management and the Tourism Minister.

SATC Publicity Department is very pro-active with seeking publicity for South Australia tourism products and destinations with a record of success. However, this department does not have the capacity to act exclusively for any one region because of its state-wide responsibilities and needs of the government

PR PUBLICITY, A MAIN MARKETING FUNCTION WITH MODERN MARKETING

Most consumer driven commercial organisations have an effective PR unit, either in-house or contracted, which provides valuable support for the Marketing Plan. PR and publicity augments budgets spent on advertising, promotion, targeted and awareness campaigns. It is uniquely placed to help maintain brand support.

In the modern era, PR units are also pro-active with initiating proposals to secure publicity or evaluating approaches from companies looking to include Riverland product in their own marketing plans as prizes for competitions, being a sponsor for a key event or perhaps being involved in the program of an event like a Food and Wine Show.

As the Riverland builds a favourable commercial presence, this will attract requests from other organisations to be involved in their marketing. Being involved in their programs can lead to
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- Helping to build the Riverland brand, and
- Provide ongoing promotion bridging the gap between the major activities of the Marketing Plan. This helps to keep “top of mind” association prominent for the Riverland.

Another valuable function is for the PR Unit to establish close links with key media. This can be valuable with:
- Gaining exposure for new developments like the foreshadowed Great Murray River Walk,
- Gaining editorial exposure for events like a music festival or sporting event or the release of a new campaign or holiday package, and
- Helping to avoid or counter negative publicity like the article above.

Not so long ago, Qantas was constantly getting negative publicity for aircraft mechanical failures. They were mostly normal operating incidents for an airline with 194 aircraft operating on many routes around the world daily. The publicity eventually declined and the factors which would have achieved this result were:
- Qantas PR department working closely with editorial staff across all media, and
- Qantas executives reminding media organisations that most events, except the A380 Singapore incident, are normal operations which usually happen without media coverage. Qantas executives would have appealed for a “fair go” because of the damage it was doing to not only their airline but to others who rely on the airline to be successful. Being a big advertiser across Australia’s media industry would have helped.

Private sector managed commercial operations are always more successful with defusing negative publicity than government departments which are part of the political system. As an example, if Sealink had been operating in the Riverland, would there have been such extensive negative coverage of unfortunate events? Not likely!

Had Riverland tourism been under professional private sector management free of government constraints, the adverse publicity like the article on the previous page could have been overcome or even totally avoided. Mr Darbyshire said at the industry meeting on 29th March last indicated SATC had been pro-active with media trying to get relief. However, this adverse publicity continued.

**Value of publicity is endorsement**

To customers, an advertisement looks like a paid advertisement. However, favourable editorial coverage can be seen by customers as an independent endorsement. Articles in newspapers, magazines, newsletters, segments on TV travel programs, weathermen presentations on TV breakfast programs when on location or radio magazine programs all have a valuable role in endorsing the destination or tourism business and enthusing customers to visit.

**OTHER MARKETING SITUATIONS WHERE PUBLICITY IS IMPORTANT**

There are a number of ways that PR publicity will be important in sector marketing for the Riverland as well as main campaigns as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing campaigns</th>
<th>Major campaigns, especially awareness campaigns all have a use for publicity support. It can be very important.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product publicity</td>
<td>This is about obtaining editorial news coverage for new or modified products. This will be part of the new Houseboats sector marketing plan. It will also be used to launch the Border Cliffs area in its own right and soon the Great Murray River Walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New product or event launches</td>
<td>Publicity can be very useful to stimulate more patrons for events and to grow demand for a new product like Pike River Luxury Villas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promotion of tourism packages</th>
<th>Activities designed to promote new packages to stimulate demand for soft periods and other new packages or other marketing initiatives.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Countering problems</td>
<td>Generating publicity to counter any negative coverage or other problems which might arise such as the recent flood levels which should have been promoted as a “plus” not deter visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing brand image</td>
<td>Hosting visiting journalists who can return to write favourable articles as to what the Riverland offers. Sponsoring some worthy causes can be fruitful in attracting favourable public opinion about the brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade publicity</td>
<td>Riverland presently neglects completely the commercial value of trade media. As the Riverland plan achieves more third party distribution channels carrying Riverland product, this will grow in importance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Accessing participation in marketing of other organisations to spread exposure

Something a PR Publicity consultant would bring to Destination Riverland are proposals to capitalise on publicity opportunities in key markets that the RTO would not normally know about.

Sometimes the contractor initiates proposals. On other occasions, the PR consultant would receive proposals that would be assessed using Destination Riverland’s marketing policies and then offer such proposals to the client with a recommendation.

These are activities, usually at very low cost, which can help lift awareness of the Riverland brand.

### RETAINING A PR PUBLICITY CONSULTANT STRONGLY RECOMMENDED

Using standard private sector practices, what is recommended is that Destination Riverland contract an experienced publicity consultancy in Adelaide to develop links across all media. This would call on the consultancy to develop close personal links with journalists and media outlets to:

- Seek maximum coverage for marketing campaigns and events in the region,
- Link publicity with advertising contractual arrangements for maximum marketing benefit,
- Maintain ongoing close links with media outlets which are essential if adverse publicity is to be minimised.

#### Tourism Hunter

Tourism Hunter is a successful private sector managed Regional Tourism Organisation for the Hunter Valley NSW. They know the value of media PR support and are very good at working with the media to maximise publicity for their activities.

#### Tourism Wollongong

Tourism Wollongong is another successful private sector managed Tourism Organisation which has been the driving force behind the launch of the now internationally famous Grand Pacific Drive. Tourism Wollongong uses a Sydney based proven PR consultancy to maximise their PR coverage.

These are not the only examples, it is now a growing practice for regional tourism organisations to use PR specialists as part of their marketing strategies.
MEMBER SUPPORT
Destination Riverland

MEMBER SUPPORT FOR DESTINATION MARKETING IS VITAL
Under public sector management of Destination Marketing Organisations (DMO's), there is no obligation to focus on supporting the commercial performance of tourism small businesses which are in fact, the tourism industry. Everything that happens in tourism has one end result, the need to drive growing numbers of visitors as customers into tourism businesses so that they are viable and contribute to the local economy. SATC policy is different which is mostly to promote SA.

However, with private sector managed Destination Marketing Organisations, top priority is to address the needs of its stakeholder members. These DMO's outside SA and under private sector management tend to regard their stakeholder members as if they are important customers for them. For this reason they, in turn, pay close attention to stakeholder needs which start at more visitors as customers and more revenue.

HOW DMO'S CATER TO THE NEEDS OF THEIR MEMBERS
DMOs around the world cater to the needs of their stakeholders enjoy strong funding support from members through these various avenues such as

- TOP PRIORITY is that the DMO focuses on the commercial performance of the industry by tailoring destination marketing activities to boost demand (more customers) for the destination which is driven into visitor economy businesses,
- Membership fee revenues increasing appropriate to the growth of business for members coming from increased visitation resulting from DMO destination marketing programs,
- All advertising for the destination to carries product offerings for tourism businesses. Riverland needs to do the same,
- Major campaigns and other marketing activities are planned in conjunction with industry stakeholders inside and, where appropriate, outside the region. Cash and kind contributions with major players are negotiated during the planning and at this time, rates for smaller contributors are determined for buy-ins,
- Cooperative marketing opportunities used to a maximum with all collateral material, and market references,
- Cooperative marketing with Visitor Economy associates like Food & Wine, Events, Golf and others where tourism is only a partner,
- Advertising opportunities on the destination website, sector marketing plans and other marketing activities targeting business,
- Sponsorships,
- Contracting services e.g. installation of digital marketing facilities, research projects, etc
- Commissions, transaction fees and E-Shop margins,
- Providing market intelligence and periodic Regional Visitor Monitors to industry members to help them to stay informed about industry trends.
ACTIVITIES TO MAINTAIN INDUSTRY SUPPORT

Activities to maintain industry support, particularly income, from stakeholder members could include:

- Assisting tourism businesses with practical measures to help them access more customers through modern marketing methods which are competitive and actually deliver results.

- Develop marketing activities that are integrated with the needs of industry members. As an example, development of the new marketing approach for houseboats is planned to be done in close cooperation with the houseboats sector. This way the industry will get the best results and so will the DMO.

- Develop market activities like the proposed Adelaide one day Riverland Travel Shows in selected suburbs with Destination Riverland arranging the event and pre-publicity. Individual industry members would be invited to visit Adelaide to participate in the stands, make presentations and talk to potential consumers to enthuse them about visiting the Riverland.

- Building strong links with the community particularly other sectors of the Visitor Industry.

- When producing e-newsletters, it is planned that these have editorial to promote highlights of the region and carry adverts for packages and other offers for customers to buy.

- Contracting services e.g. introduction of digital marketing tools so that the DMO maintains a uniform standard and industry members get a financial benefit.

- Fee for service e.g. inviting stakeholders to share costs for research projects, photo shoots, etc.

- Networking nights would continue as now so that industry members can informally chat about industry activities and learn of forthcoming marketing plans.

- Likewise Tourism Award functions should also be financed as they are now but with profit centre accounting.

- Member satisfaction surveys. Access to digital facilities will allow members to be surveyed on a range of issues at virtually no cost.

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It is an aim of this plan that during Phase One (Year 1), calls on the industry for financial support will need to keep in mind the current cash flow difficulties of the industry. During this phase, there will also be a call on tourism businesses to invest in technology to help make them competitive and to help earn more income from digital marketing in Phases Two and Three integrated marketing campaigns as well as cooperative campaigns and other marketing planned during these phases.

By Phase Three, most destination marketing should be based on digital campaigns and other activities with the private sector being in a position to provide more funding support for destination marketing. By this time, there will also be less reliance on traditional marketing.
FUNDING THE PLAN

Riverland tourism is a resource not recognised for its ability to provide the Riverland local community with valuable contributions to the economy at a time when the farm and wine sectors have problems.

WHY HAS THE COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL OF TOURISM AS AN EMERGING INDUSTRY BEEN OVERLOOKED?

Since 2000, the Riverland has suffered these major economic setbacks

- The local rural economy has suffered from the drought and water restrictions,
- The wine industry has been hit by reducing water allocations, tough international competition as well as an over-supply of grapes in Australia,
- Significant job losses in the Riverland including the National Foods/Berri Fruit Ltd closure with 120 jobs lost and others including 100 jobs lost when Fletchers Freighters closed down
- Tourism’s drop in visitors of 35.8% has resulted in over $200 million in revenues being lost for the Riverland visitor industry and Riverland economy. Presently poor tourism results are costing the Visitor Economy over $41 million per annum in lost revenues.

Tourism’s poor performance has only been marginally impacted by the drought and river levels. The main reasons for tourism’s failure are

(1) Under public sector management, private sector entrepreneurial flair, innovation, enterprise and initiative has just not been possible. Bureaucratic control from Adelaide has completely stifled any commercial initiative by the private sector to counter poor results yet there has been no counter action taken by SATC in this regard

(2) Destination marketing has been poor and limited to a few tactical promotions. Emphasis has been limited to promoting the destination not targeting customers for businesses which is 21st century practice adopted by Riverland’s competitors in Australia and by overseas tourism organisations,

(3) Riverland destination marketing is limited to 1990’s operating standards. A state-wide strategy to lift regional SA to 21st century digital standards has not been introduced.

FUNDING NEEDED FOR PLAN TO REJUVENATE INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE

The most urgent need for the region is for a plan that goes beyond advertising and promotion activities. This plan is designed to

- Rejuvenate demand and profitability in the short to medium term, but
- At the same time introduce modern management and marketing skills across the region for both the DMO and individual businesses to enable the industry to become sustainable from 2015 onwards and to be less reliant on public funds.
- Extend to allied industries (retail, wine, food, golf, motor sports, etc) in the Visitor Economy to help them get a better share of visitor revenues, and
- Restore the appeal of the destination to investors so as to attract investment capital.

Present results would have been far better if the modern progressive marketing elements of this plan had been put in train five years ago. This would have injected significant new revenues into the Riverland economy at a time when economic relief was needed to relieve the downturns being experienced by the region’s rural and wine industries.
THE RIVERLAND TOURISM INDUSTRY NEEDS

(1) INDUSTRY RESTRUCTURE NOW TO 21ST CENTURY DIGITAL ERA STANDARDS

(2) PROFESSIONAL, COMPETITIVE STANDARD MANAGEMENT OF COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS FOR DESTINATION MARKETING. THIS MEANS TRANSFERRING MANAGEMENT FROM PUBLIC SECTOR PERSONNEL TO PRIVATE SECTOR EXPERIENCED AND PROVEN TOURISM INDUSTRY EXECUTIVES,

(3) TO ATTRACT THESE TOP EXECUTIVES, COMPETITIVE, COMMERCIAL LEVEL SALARY PACKAGES NEED TO BE OFFERED TO ATTRACT THE RIGHT TALENT, ATTRACTING CANDIDATES TO THE REMOTE AREA OF THE RIVERLAND MAY NOT BE APPEALING TO SOME AND ATTRACTIVE FINANCIAL REWARDS COULD BE A CRITICAL FACTOR IN GAINING THEIR INTEREST IN THE APPOINTMENTS

(4) FOCUS OF THE NEW ORGANISATION TO GENERATE MAXIMUM REVENUES FOR THE VISITOR ECONOMY BY TARGETING MORE CUSTOMERS FOR TOURISM AND OTHER BUSINESSES USING MODERN DIGITAL ERA MARKETING TO REPLACE 20TH CENTURY PROMOTIONAL PRACTICES WHICH STILL PREVAIL,

(5) WHEN DESTINATION MARKETING COMES UNDER PRIVATE SECTOR MARKETING FOCUSING ON BUSINESS OUTCOMES, A NEW SOURCE OF FUNDING WILL OPEN UP FOR DESTINATION MARKETING. IT WILL COME FROM THE INDUSTRY’S PRIVATE SECTOR WHICH WILL GET BEHIND THE NEW POLICIES BECAUSE THEY WILL BE TARGETING BUSINESS OUTCOMES. Presently the private sector does not usually support the few SATC driven activities because they are not targeting business outcomes like Riverland’s competitors.

Also it should be noted that with visitor numbers falling to such serious low levels, many tourism businesses do not have the cash flow to fund refurbishment and marketing. Any new marketing to rejuvenate the industry needs to keep in mind that industry support in the short term for marketing is likely to be difficult.

PLAN IS FOR THREE YEARS TO RESTRUCTURE INDUSTRY OPERATIONS

This plan is designed to
- Rejuvenate the commercial success of the industry as quickly as possible to benefit the Riverland community which is suffering from the rural and wine industry downturns,
- Restructure the industry so that it can return to viability and stay viable for many years to come,
- At the end of three years, the industry structure to be reviewed to suit operating circumstances at that time. It is expected that by then, Destination Riverland will need fewer executives and will make greater use of outsourcing.

This aim applies to both rejuvenating the Destination Marketing Organisation and the wide array of small businesses reliant on the visitor industry.

The amount being sought from the Riverland Futures Fund is based on a carefully considered plan. It draws on importing experienced expertise for three years to reverse the industry downturn by sharing their experience and industry knowledge with industry stakeholders in such a way that they can lift their business performance to become more competitive and more profitable.

This is important if banks and venture capitalists are to change their attitudes towards investing in tourism operations.
PUBLIC SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE NEW ERA

This planned restructure is built on successful modern 21st century practices in Queensland, NT, New Zealand, USA, Canada, UK and other countries.

The role of SATC will not be affected apart from providing support for Riverland marketing initiatives and facilitating inter-regional coordination where required.

The role of Riverland Councils will be to continue their funding support as now, provide a Board member for Destination Riverland Bard as well as focussing on product developments and investor services.

DESTINATION RIVERLAND PROPOSED STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

The proposed structure for Destination Riverland as shown in Section C 6 provides for

- Board comprised of Chairman and 8 members,
- Management team and supporting staff of 7,
- Outsourcing of specialist technical skills.

Tourism Board

The present Riverland Tourism Association is ceasing to operate. It is planned that Destination Riverland Board take over these functions.

An Interim Tourism Board of experienced tourism and business leaders has been formed and this will soon be replaced by the first Tourism Board appointments. Establishing the new organisation with regular monthly Board meetings will require a special budget allocation.

The Annual General Meeting each year will need to be planned as a significant industry event so that it can have its own budget on a profit centre basis.

Management

One of the constraints on a better commercial performance by SA’s tourism industry is the difference in attitude of the public and private sectors to salary arrangements for tourism management positions.

Public sector attitudes are penalising the commercial performance of the SA tourism industry. The need for competitive commercial salaries for key management appointments is vital if the commercial performance of Destination Riverland and individual businesses is to be lifted to competitive levels.

NEEDS OF THE RIVERLAND TOURISM INDUSTRY

The continuing declining results for the Riverland tourism industry and the Riverland Visitor Economy dictates that a new approach is urgently needed as follows

1. Industry restructure is top priority so that the Riverland tourism industry can be competitive again with modern destination marketing strategies growing demand for the destination and visitor economy businesses,

2. Introduction of professional competent, competitive private sector management. This will allow destination marketing to focus on generating better commercial results free of public sector constraints,
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

(3) Focus of the new organisation will be business generation using modern digital marketing to replace 20th century standard promotional activities,

(4) Embrace digital marketing as an urgent priority,

(5) Strong funding support from the private sector will become possible,

(6) Tourism will be able to work closely with other sectors in the visitor industry. This will help the two sectors to build better results in tandem,

(7) Growth of tourism results and private sector management of the Destination Marketing Organisation will restore confidence of banks and venture capital funding agencies in tourism investment opportunities.

SATC FUNDING CEASING ON 1ST JULY 2011

From 1st July 2011, SATC significantly reduced its support for regional tourism across SA (including the Riverland). This is summarised as follows

- Positions of Regional Marketing Manager and Regional Coordinator ceased from 30 June
- Marketing funds are all centralised to Adelaide to be spent on SATC programs they provide for regions
- Will part pay for a local Liaison Officer to be the SATC contact point in the Riverland. Appointment to be based on Riverland Councils sharing the cost,
- Regional Visitor Guide is being outsourced which will mean that the cost of collecting advertising revenues and production charges and will be reflected in increased advertising rates. It is unlikely regional businesses will be very interested when they know how much more expensive it will be to be listed in these brochures,
- SATC Cooperate funding ceases
- SATC subsidies for Caravan and Camping Shows cease
- Photo shoot subsidies, not likely,
- $1 for $1 funding for locally developed marketing activities ceases
- $1 for $2 funding for locally developed marketing activities ceases
- Administration contribution to the RTA ceases.

Summary

SATC funding support for Riverland marketing developed locally after 1st July 2011 is expected to be negligible.

INDUSTRY RESTRUCTURE IS ESSENTIAL

The Riverland tourism industry has not been restructured since Hon Joan Hall was the Minister for Tourism in the 1990s. Under the Liberal Government of the day, regions were structured with private sector leadership supported by Marketing Officers provided by SATC. After the change of Government, SATC progressively edged out private sector leadership and restructured regional tourism under control from Adelaide.

SATC could have adopted a policy that helped the private sector improve its destination marketing skills so that each region could progress to become a strong, growing, competitive and prosperous private sector. Like other states, SATC could have provided additional support for major marketing strategies. Had they done so, regional tourism in SA would be performing much better. Under private sector management, knowing they had to solve their own problems, private sector leadership working with a strong State Tourism Organisation would have developed more progressive solutions.

Instead SATC has cultivated a hand-out mentality with regional tourism who can believe they are not allowed to take any initiative unless SATC approves and provides the funding.
PROPOSED MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

This plan is based on completely new and modern management and marketing methods for the Riverland. Shown earlier in this plan are details of the proposed management structures.

The proposed marketing plan is summarised in outline below with a diagrammatic presentation on the next page

Anticipated development actions

It was anticipated that Destination Riverland would develop the plan as according to the timelines below. Delays to finalising the plan will affect the schedule below.

| July 11 | Destination Riverland Board formed to address three priority issues  
| | • Recruitment of Chief Executive and other managers  
| | • Selection of office location for Destination Riverland  
| | • Appointment of an interim Manager to support the Board and to maintain day to day tactical marketing activities until the new management team is in position. |
| Within 3 months | Complete selection processes and establish new office premises. |
| Aug-Sep 11 | Develop 101 Holiday ideas brochure ready for October launch |
| Oct 11 | Launch awareness program with 101 Holiday ideas brochure. |
| Oct 11-Jun 12 | MAJOR INITIATIVE PLANNING– BEGIN DEVELOPMENT OF DESTINATION WEBSITE AND HELP UPGRADE BUSINESS WEBSITES |
| By Nov 11 | Appoint PR consultant |
| Nov-Dec | Develop Houseboats brochure for February launch |
| Nov 11-Dec 12 | MAJOR INITIATIVE – BEGIN INTRODUCTION OF DIGITAL TOOLS AND DIGITAL MARKETING |
| Feb–Mar 12 | Houseboats campaign |
| Mar-Apr 12 | Autumn tactical campaign to stimulate demand |
| May–Jul 12 | Winter tactical campaign to stimulate winter demand |
| Jan–Oct 12 | MAJOR CAMPAIGN. Integrated, targeted, cooperative campaign with industry partners from within and outside the Riverland. This campaign will use the new destination website, digital marketing, traditional advertising, modern merchandising methods and PR publicity activities. There will be use of third party distribution channels to reach more customers than ever before. It will also use special offers and package options. The campaign will drive customers to Riverland websites |
| Feb-Mar 13 | Autumn tactical campaign |
| May-Jun 13 | Winter tactical campaign |

Sector marketing

Each sector needs specialised targeted marketing with elements varying considerably. With sector marketing to be strong funding support is anticipated from each sector as each marketing campaign will be tailored to the needs of the sector.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

DESTINATION RIVERLAND
Draft Plan Program Diagram

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>2011/2012</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SATC Regional Manager retained during interim</td>
<td>Management team in place</td>
<td>Houseboats brochure development</td>
<td>Houseboats campaign</td>
<td>Winter tactical</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Board formed</td>
<td>BEGIN INTRODUCING DIGITAL TOOLS AND DIGITAL MARKETING</td>
<td>DEVELOPMENT OF NEW DESTINATION WEBSITE AND HELP BUSINESS WEBSITES TO UPGRADE</td>
<td>BEGIN INTRODUCING DIGITAL TOOLS AND DIGITAL MARKETING</td>
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<tr>
<td>101 holidays brochure development</td>
<td>Awareness tactical</td>
<td>Launch 101 brochure</td>
<td>Awareness tactical</td>
<td>Winter tactical</td>
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<tr>
<td>PR CONSULTANT APPOINTED</td>
<td>Cont Jul-Aug</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>2012/2013</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winter tactical (cont)</td>
<td>MAJOR CAMPAIGN</td>
<td>Autumn tactical</td>
<td>Winter tactical</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MAJOR CAMPAIGN</td>
<td>An integrated, targeted, cooperative campaign with industry partners within and outside region Planning to begin January 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awareness campaign will be continued using greater event promotion and PR activities</td>
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</table>

Awareness tactical, Autumn tactical, Winter tactical.

These campaigns will focus on promoting reasons to visit the region, both towns and villages, with PR coverage plus offer attractive products that customers can buy. Achieving sales/bookings being the top priority.

MAJOR CAMPAIGN

This campaign will be designed to make a quantum lift in desire to visit the Riverland and to focus on offering a wide range of Riverland holiday options for customers to buy.

This campaign will make wide use of the new digital marketing tools which will be available within the region by Spring 2012. It will also use the modern destination marketing method of integrated, targeted, cooperative marketing that adds extra support to the budget and also has greater market reach. This is vastly different to the SATC approach which is nothing more than cooperative advertising at best.
## PROVISIONAL BUDGETS REQUIRED FOR MAJOR MARKETING ACTIVITIES

All campaigns to offer priced products for immediate purchase to help cash flow

### SUMMARY

Budget below is for first two years only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Budget items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>Awareness program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business objective: Start program to build Riverland awareness to boost bookings for Spring through to end Jan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 12</td>
<td>Houseboats campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business objective: Start program to build demand for Houseboat holidays. To boost bookings demand for soft February March period and autumn holidays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 12</td>
<td>Adelaide Caravan and Camping Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business objective: To build on Riverland awareness and to offer priced products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar-12</td>
<td>Autumn tactical campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business objective: To build on Riverland awareness and to offer priced products for March and April</td>
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<tr>
<td>May Jun</td>
<td>Winter campaign:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business objective: To boost bookings demand for soft winter months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>MAJOR CAMPAIGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business objective: To give Riverland a huge boost in awareness and to help restore Riverland’s image as a preferred destination market. All advertising to offer leisure travel options in the Riverland available to buy as well as promoting the destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb13</td>
<td>Autumn tactical campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business objective: To maintain Riverland “top of mind” awareness and to offer priced products for March and April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-13</td>
<td>Winter tactical campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business objective: To boost bookings demand for soft winter months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### OTHER MARKETING ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Budget items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>Development of destination website, and Destination Management System as a management and marketing aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 11</td>
<td>Appoint PR consultant Dec 2011-Jun 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photo Library management ($1500 pa)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

664,050

Further details for each budget item are shown as an Appendix to this Section.

**Budget total needed for 3 years $4,201,400 as shown in the Appendix to this Section**
FUNDING FOR THIS PLAN

This plan is based on the following funding arrangements:

- A grant from the Riverland Futures Fund of $4.2 million over three years,
- Continuation of support from Riverland Councils at present levels which currently stands at $906,585,
- Support from the private sector in the past. Under Riverland Tourism Association, the industry has contributed membership fees and other contributions to destination marketing in recent years as follows:
  - Recharge promotion (50% of $25,000)
  - Annual membership fees $29,704
  - Regional Visitors Guide $75,851

But private sector funding support for destination marketing is very limited because the public sector is only interested in promoting destinations (old fashioned concept) and putting their priorities first, not the commercial needs of the private sector. By comparison, progressive destination marketing organisations interstate and overseas today focus on targeting customers.

101 Holiday Ideas brochure and Houseboats brochure

This plan proposes that the Regional Visitor Guide, an expensive publication that focuses on providing product information, be replaced with new less costly brochures which target business outcomes and refer customers to websites and Visitor Information Centres for further information.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

Appendix to Section C 9

PROVISIONAL BUDGETS REQUIRED FOR MAJOR MARKETING ACTIVITIES

All campaigns will offer priced products for immediate purchase to help cash flows
The structure of the program is built around three different phases.

Year One takes into consideration
- Need to get cash flows moving ASAP,
- New management cannot be recruited for about three months,
- Development of a new destination website complete with the tools it needs to be successful
- Introduction of digital marketing facilities,
- Helping tourism businesses to better understand how to benefit from new industry practices particularly modern merchandising methods and use of new yield management practices. These are also important to destination marketing being able to penetrate new business more successfully

Year Two, by October, it is expected that all the objectives of Year One should have been achieved so that the strategy can concentrate on a major campaign to stimulate demand over the summer and following autumn. More important is to establish a firm position in the market of holiday ideas that await visitors to buy (book). The technology will be in place to capture new business from the impulse buying market. This campaign is not promotional like SATC, it is targeted marketing to secure customers for visitor industry businesses in the region.

Year Three is designed to take full advantage of the digital marketing technology to maintain and grow demand using mainly the lower cost digital marketing supported by some traditional means to drive customers into Riverland websites.

YEAR ONE 2011/2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Awareness program</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Project total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>Business objective: Start program to build Riverland awareness to boost bookings for Spring through to end Jan</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>101 Holiday Ideas brochure</td>
<td>Production</td>
<td>44,800</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Distribution incl VICs on approach routes</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Download ex website</td>
<td>500</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday Mail HP incl design and prod</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Fri Advertiser HP incl design and prod</td>
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<td>65,680</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 12</td>
<td>Houseboats campaign</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business objective: Start program to build demand for Houseboat holidays. To boost bookings demand for soft February March period and autumn holidays</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Houseboats brochure</td>
<td>Production</td>
<td>34,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fri Advertiser 5x7 incl design and prod</td>
<td>6510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adelaide NOW digital advertising</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to be ready</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41,560</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>41,560</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to be ready</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Brochure production estimates for the 101 Holiday Ideas brochure, Houseboats brochure and Advertiser insert have been kindly provided by “That’s Graphic”, Loxton

Feb 12 Adelaide Caravan and Camping Show

| Business objective: To build on Riverland awareness and to offer priced products |
| Budget for stand, display aids, travel expenses | $4000 |
| 101 Holidays Brochure to be promoted | $4000 |

Advance Tourism 113
## Riverland Tourism Development Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mar-12</th>
<th>Autumn tactical campaign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business objective:</strong> To build on Riverland awareness and to offer priced products for March and April</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 adverts Advertiser 15x7 incl design and prod</td>
<td>13,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban travel show Adelaide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget (Hire of venue, displays, Riverland presenters, local promotion)</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>May Jun</th>
<th>Winter campaign:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business objective:</strong> To boost bookings demand for soft winter months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Mail HP incl design and prod</td>
<td>11,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up ad 15x7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri Advertiser</td>
<td>6150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban travel show Adelaide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget (Hire of venue, displays, Riverland presenters, local promotion)</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## OTHER MARKETING ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oct 11</th>
<th>Development of destination website and assistance for tourism businesses. Also progress development of a Destination Management System as a management and marketing aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Destination website to fulfill these tasks

- Primary function is business generation for accommodation providers, visitor attractions and events organisers by providing information to secure commitments to visit and make bookings to visit the destination
- Maximum benefit comes from local industry stakeholders being linked with their information to achieve sales
- Home page very important
- Ease of navigation with good links is essential,
- Participating businesses need access to a Content Management System to enable content data and pics to be kept up-to-date by the businesses.

### Features will include

- iPad and iPhone integration
- Destination presentation including video, galleries etc.
- Products and experiences
- Hot Deals and Special Offers
- Links management
- Online booking system through Channel manager systems
- Merchandise sales online by E-Shop.

### E-marketing tools to come from the system

- e-newsletters including data-base
- e-brochure downloading facilities
- Competitions
- Micro-site campaigns
- Research
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

- Monitoring performance
- Surveys
- Management planning
- Marketing performance
- Membership liaison
- Social media

Estimated cost of the system provided by Discover Murray, a very experienced website developer for organisations and businesses along the Murray River. Discover Murray River kindly provided the mock-up of the proposed Home page for the new Riverland destination website.

- Systems development as outlined above 180,000
- Training, manuals, and support 25,000
- Total budget 205,000
- Annual management fee which includes Google analytics, SEO, other website data, management stats and upgrading of system as technology advances occur. 15,000

Nov 11 Appoint PR consultant
Dec 2011-Jun 2013 25,000

Photo Library management) 1,500
Media familiarisations 10,000 pa

Total 395,640

YEAR TWO 2012/2013

Oct 12 MAJOR CAMPAIGN

Business objective: To give Riverland a huge boost in awareness and to help restore Riverland’s image as a preferred destination market. All advertising to offer leisure travel options in the Riverland available to buy as well as promoting the destination.

Launch with
- 8 pp insert in Advertiser Sat 40,800
- 8 pp insert production 19,656
- FP Sunday Mail incl prod 21,654

Followed over 3 weeks by
- HP Advertiser incl prod 6510
- HP Sunday Mail incl prod 11,870
- Adverts on Adelaide Now sports pages TBA

TV campaign regional SA 40,000

RAA samotor
- FP advert incl prod 8500 148,990

This event is designed to have in place all digital marketing tools to help Riverland marketing to grow and be more effective at lower cost.

By this time all adverts will be directing customers to the destination website and tourism business websites, e-newsletters will have become regular promotional events and the PR publicity program will not only be raising awareness of what the Riverland has to offer but will returning a dividend in terms of new business being written by Riverland businesses. This is what tourism is all about.

Advance Tourism 115
### Riverland Tourism Development Plan

#### Autumn tactical campaign

**Business objective:** To maintain Riverland “top of mind” awareness and to offer priced products for March, April and May

- 2 adverts Advertiser 15x7 incl design and prod | 13,020
- Support with e-newsletters

- Suburban travel show Adelaide
  - Budget (Hire of venue, displays, Riverland presenters, local promotion) | 5,000 | 18,020

#### Winter tactical campaign

**Business objective:** To boost bookings demand for soft winter months

- Two follow up ads 15x7
  - Sunday Mail HP incl design and prod | 11,870
  - Fri Advertiser | 13,020

- Suburban travel show Adelaide
  - Budget (Hire of venue, displays, Riverland presenters, local promotion) | 5,000 | 29,890

- Support with e-newsletters

#### Appoint PR consultant

- Dec 2011-Jun 2013 | 80,000

#### Photo Library management

- 1,500

#### Media familiarisations

- 10,000

#### Total

- 289,860

NO PLANNING FOR YEAR 3 HAS BEEN MADE. INSTEAD A TOTAL BUDGET ALLOCATION OF $330,000 IS PROPOSED

**ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATING COSTS**

These costs are in three groups

- **Salaries,**
- **Administration costs,**
- **Operating costs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salaries incl oncosts</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales &amp; Marketing Manager</td>
<td>These</td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td>180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT Marketing Manager</td>
<td>appointments</td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td>180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Operations Manager</td>
<td>do not start</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin &amp; Finance Manager</td>
<td>until</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO Personal Assistant</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Officer.</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>840,000</td>
<td>1,050,000</td>
<td>1,050,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Administration costs**

- Office rental (Note A) | 40,000 | 40,000 | 40,000 |
- Board costs | 1,500 | 1,500 | 1,500 |
- AGM costs (Note B) |        |        | |

Advance Tourism 116
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power and utilities</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insurances</td>
<td>allowance</td>
<td>allowance</td>
<td>allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank charges</td>
<td>this group</td>
<td>this group</td>
<td>this group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>53,500</td>
<td>53,500</td>
<td>53,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note A:** Mr Mark Cresp, Ray White, Renmark indicated rental premises in the Renmark area are likely to be as high as $40,000 if Destination Riverland is to be based there although some premises may be found with rents as low as $20,000.

**Note B:** Wherever possible activities like the AGM and networking nights should become part of a “profit centre” accounting practice and the profit or loss taken up at the end of the fiscal year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating costs</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication charges</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing and stationery</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership servicing (Note B)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and accommodation expenses</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverland Tourism Awards (Note B)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capital</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office fit-out incl communications equipment</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**SUMMARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
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<td>289,260</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New staff (A)</td>
<td>787,500</td>
<td>1,050,000</td>
<td>1,050,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interim Manager (B)</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interim overheads (B)</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative costs</td>
<td>53,000</td>
<td>53,000</td>
<td>53,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating costs</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital fit-out</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>$1,346,140</td>
<td>$1,422,260</td>
<td>$1,433,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grant needed from the Riverland Futures Fund for this 3 year plan is $4,201,400
PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Monitoring performance is a basic function of every commercial operation. At the very least, at Board level, there should be a monthly review of recent results, current results and future trends. At management level, with the aid of computers, performance monitoring is often on a daily basis.

With fast moving commercial industries, this is vital to maintain profitability and satisfactory business results including shareholder returns. Where results are in decline action is taken to address the problem

BUT NOT IN SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TOURISM

With no performance monitoring, the commercial performance of the private sector has been seriously neglected.

This is a major reason behind the 35.8% decline in visitors To the riverland since 2000.

NORMAL COMMERCIAL PRACTICE

It is normal commercial practice that when results are down, or even worse still, where results are trending down, as they have been for some time in the Riverland, strategies are put in place to counter any problems.

If the Riverland tourism industry had been structured with an autonomous private sector Board and management, they would have quickly come under pressure from industry stakeholders if they were not being pro-active.

Performance targets for the year and for each month or trading period would have been used at the beginning of the year to assist performance monitoring. When a negative result is to hand, the first reaction is to discuss counter-measures to restore revenue levels.

Under public sector management, the public sector is quick to provide explanations for depressed results but this overlooks the more important information – what is going to be done about it? Under public sector management, nothing has been done about countering the problems the industry has been experiencing.

Tourism businesses have cash flow demands and have no access to public funds to cover their operating overheads.

THIS IS A VERY GOOD REASON WHY THE PUBLIC SECTOR HAS NO ROLE IN THE COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS OF TOURISM IN SUCCESSFUL DESTINATIONS IN AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND OR OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD..

BUSINESS PLAN

Each year, private sector managed Regional Tourism Organisations have Business Plans which include budgets for revenue and expenditure broken out into accounting periods.

The Business Plan is a performance monitoring tool to monitor

- Implementation of planned activities,
- Revenues earned,
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

- Expenditures,
- Financial status.

It is this information which is used to guide the progress and performance of the organisation. This is not a normal function in the public sector.

REGIONAL VISITOR MONITOR

In Section C03 are details of a Regional Visitor Monitor proposed for the Riverland. It is based on assembling data that is readily available and would be a great help for Destination Riverland and others when planning any tourism marketing.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

With the introduction of digital marketing facilities comes a variety of management tools for the destination website, the online booking system and associated accounting systems. With the introduction of these facilities, for the first time Riverland destination marketing will have access to local data automatically gathered to guide better management and marketing decisions.

This technology also provides more effective marketing and operational efficiencies at low cost to overhead budgets.

It also enables production of
- e-newsletters,
- e-mailing of brochures and promotional leaflets,
- Competitions for consumers or travel trade,
- Micro-sites for dedicated campaigns,
- Surveys of consumers or industry members
- Links to social media.

Manually this is just not practical presently.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The DMS has direct access to all this information and more. It can provide performance statistics for website usage data, online reservations activities, campaigns, normal operations, trend information, etc. It is an unprecedented management tool to help improve the organisation’s and the region’s destination business performance and planning.
LOCAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Something for the community

Tourism provides something extra which few other industries can offer an opportunity to showcase the region’s great heritage and natural assets in a way which doesn’t just delight the visitors but also improves everyday quality of life for residents.

The Riverland is not just a good place to visit but it is a great place to live. If Riverland residents happen to live somewhere which is beautiful and impressive; and which the rest of the world wants to visit, it gives the community something to be proud of too.

SA’s Riverland is a very special place, for residents and visitors alike.

TOURISM CAN BRING MUCH TO THE RIVERLAND WAY OF LIFE

Social benefits

A prosperous growing tourism industry adds to the way of life for the residents with features like

- Visitors who love their retail therapy which helps shops to be viable resulting. In turn, locals have more shopping choices,
- More restaurants, events, sports facilities that would not exist if it were not for visitors
- Visitors to historic homes, art galleries, museums, licensed clubs, etc add greatly to incomes to help offset operating costs met by the community,
- Funds for events enjoyed by the community are augmented by revenues from visitors which help to attract more prestigious artists, quality art displays, etc.,
- Creating more jobs means more residents particularly families. More families adds to school numbers, better local medical facilities and in some instances, better public transport,

A growing tourism industry not only adds to the local economy, it adds to
- Social benefits for the community, demand for new infrastructure and services benefiting visitors and locals,
- An improvement in community cohesiveness through partnerships built between local people, organisations and businesses

Missed opportunity

Over recent years the Riverland has been beset with some dreadful problems causing job losses. This has caused an economic set-back for the community.

Had the tourism industry been managed by the private sector, the visitor economy could have benefitted by special marketing initiatives to attract more visitors to the region to inject funds into local businesses. Also more resources could have been found to boost publicity for events.

Under public sector management, there was no action taken to counter the downturn in visitors and no special marketing undertaken to counter some of the poor images being reported in the Riverland’s major markets. So, unnecessarily, not only were rural and wine industry results depressed but so were tourism results; the one industry which could have been used to compensate to some degree from the setbacks of other industries.
Young adults
Population drift is a problem for many regional communities particularly the loss of young adults. It is vital for Australia that regional centres retain and attract young adults who are the future for many communities. Tourism has a role to play in helping to keep young adults in the community.

The Riverland is fortunate to have so many wonderful attractions, superb sporting facilities and not to be overlooked, a magnificent events calendar. Which appeal to young adults.

It is important to the Riverland that the tourism industry be used to boost visitor numbers so that jobs, social activities and the local way of life can offer so many features.

COMMUNITY PRIDE
In Wollongong, Tourism Wollongong developed their “We Love the Gong” campaign. Details can be found at welovethegong.com.au. It has been a hugely successful initiative resulting in great pride amongst local residents who have really got behind helping their tourism industry in many ways.

For the Riverland community to do likewise would be wonderful for the community. The Riverland community could do as Wollongong and other destinations have done which is to develop a campaign to “tell the world” or at least SA, just why the Riverland is such a wonderful place to enjoy.

RIVERLAND COMMUNITY CAN HELP TOURISM
Helping to attract VFR and other visitors
Members of the Riverland community can play a valuable role in attracting visitors whether they be friends and relatives, contacts in government and businesses, sports and other common interests to hold their event or conference in the region.

ATTRACTING INVESTMENT
Presently attracting investment in tourism is very difficult. The attitudes of banks and capital investment sources can be helped by the tourism industry, allied visitor industry friends and the community working together to help attract more visitors.

WEEKEND TRADING
A problem many regional communities face are weekend visitors, particularly on holiday long weekends, who want to go shopping but the shops are shut. Residents who work in the retail industry are entitled to days off but many regional communities are able to devise ways to have shops open when visitors are about on weekends. There is a real need in the Riverland to address this challenge so that visitor dollars can be captured for the local economy.
GREAT MURRAY RIVER WALK

A new feature to set the Riverland apart from the rest of the Murray River

A group of nine Riverland tourism businesses have developed an exciting new concept, the Great Murray River Walk, which will set the Riverland aside from all other regional destinations along the Murray River in South Australia and over the border. With the right marketing it will provide the Riverland with a real competitive advantage. It will also play an important role in lifting awareness of the region.

The product
The walk will be 66 kms long linking Customs House near the Victorian border with Renmark. It will be a 4 day walk through magnificent river scenery, spectacular cliffs and national parks. Each day will be a 16 kms walk and overnight stops will be spent in and sophisticated eco-camp sites with very comfortable eco-tents.

Travel in the reverse direction will be tailored to customer preferences which may be a houseboat hire, road transport or other means. The route will no doubt also attract self-guided walkers who will move independently along the walk trail but they will arrange their own transport in the reverse direction.

Point of difference
This will be a first class product which should be exploited by Tourism Riverland to the full as it offers the Riverland region both

- An appealing new product, and
- A point of difference with all other Murray River destinations as well as all other SA regional destinations.

Golden opportunity for Tourism Riverland
Tourism Riverland should join with the entrepreneurs involved to develop a special launch strategy which will have impact. It is only possible to launch once for maximum publicity and trade impact.

In this Plan to rejuvenate Riverland tourism, there is a proposal to retain a PR consultancy. Maximising impact from the launch campaign will require such specialised advice and follow up with media.

The launch should be supported with a prominent display on the Riverland destination website and e-marketing if the facilities are operating by then.

Another feature of the launch should be a special offer. There are other options for the launch which could be considered.

“Must do” attraction
Given the spectacular route with the return journey being possible by road, houseboat and other options, if the Great River Walk is well marketed with a good launch campaign, it could soon become a "must do" attraction with wide market appeal. However, this will not happen without a professional standard, well resourced (money and skilled manpower) launch marketing strategy.

With good marketing, there is no reason why the Great River Walk cannot grow to rank internationally with these high profile walks

- West Coast Trail, South Island NZ,
- Overland Track, Tasmania,
- Great Ocean Walk, part of the Great Ocean Road, Victoria

The success of this product will benefit other visitor industry businesses in the Riverland.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

Attachment B

FOOD AND WINE

One of the great assets of the Riverland for the visitor industry.

What food and wine businesses want most is more customers and more revenue. This Food and Wine strategy has this as it’s top priority.

To boost patronage of food and wine locations, first it will be necessary to change the present product driven approach to a market/customer driven approach. What leisure traveller customers want mostly from food and wine is an enjoyable experience starting with the ambience of the venue, friendly hospitality, find food and wine and a memorable experience appropriate to the occasion. Families have different expectations to a couple celebrating a wedding anniversary.

Riverland offers a great range of food and wine choices

The region offers visitors a great range of food and wine venues which collectively are not well merchandised due to shortcomings in food, wine and tourism marketing. Some of the Riverland’s wonderful features are

- Unique venues like Tower Tavern Renmark where visitors can feed the wildlife from the balcony, Banrock Station, Overland Corner Hotel, Mallyons Bush Café and Gallery, Mallee Fowl Restaurant, Murray River Queen, Bonnyview Wines Cellar Door and Restaurant, Renmark Club with its magnificent river views, Woolshed Brewery overlooking the Murray River and others
- Restaurants serving fine fare like Nanya Bistro at Renmark Hotel
- Restaurants with magnificent views overlooking golf courses,
- Cellar doors, fewer than in the past
- Outstanding bakeries in Loxton, Waikerie, Barmera and other locations,
- Backyard Bread at Cobdogla,
- A real feature of the region is TWO chocolate shops, one in Waikerie and one at Monash,
- Speciality food shops like Illalangi, Nuts About fruit and Almond Hut,
- Markets held on a regular basis. It is normal for most markets to be known by the name of their location e.g. Red Hill Market, Barmera Market, etc. To boost the appeal of the Riverland Market it is recommended that it be known as the Berri Riverland Market,
- Roadside produce shops and self-service produce stalls. Australians love shopping where they can buy produce direct from local growers.

If the visitor industry is to deliver more customers spending more money with food and wine businesses, it will call for a new approach if visitors are to be enthused to become customers of Riverland food and wine outlets and venues whether they be families, mature age adults travelling on holidays or sporting enthusiast in the Riverland for a sports event, etc.

What is very clear is that most destinations today give much prominence to their food and wine offerings. It is what visitors want and Riverland’s competitors are catering to their needs. The Riverland needs to do the same, only better.

main thrust of the food and wine strategy

The main thrust of the Food and Wine strategy is to lift the merchandising approach. First, the quality of merchandising material and market communication activities need to be lifted to match or better the competition. The Riverland needs to move away from spending small sums in penny packets on printed material which reaches only a few of the visitors or potential visitors and then only after they have arrived in the region.
New destination website

Modern destination marketing is designed to drive customers to the regional website. With the proposed new Riverland website it is proposed that, with Food and Wine being a marketing priority for this plan, there will be a special Food and Wine section accessed from the Home page directly. Also there will be regular promotional boxes on the Home page supporting initiatives listed below. These promotional boxes will take customers direct to the Food and Wine section.

The new destination website will be designed to target SA customers, other Australian customers and reach out around the world. Getting links to other websites will be a priority so that the Riverland website can reach new markets.

The Food and Wine section of the website will be designed with a variety of features and product information aimed at securing a commitment from customers to visit and patronise food and wine establishments.

Also below are a number of merchandising initiatives proposed to raise interest amongst customers in the Riverland as a food and wine destination and, in particular, the food and wine businesses of the region.

Special feature. The new website will be designed with a brochure download capability. The promotional material referred to below will, in most instances, be capable of being downloaded from the food and wine webpage by customers, travel industry contacts and media in their home or office.

E-Shop. As part of the new destination website, it is proposed that an E-Shop be included. This will be available for local food and wine businesses to make their products available through this facility if they wish. It will have two values, one to promote the products for sale on the internet but also to allow customers to “window shop” then come to the Riverland to buy the products in person.

MERCHANDISING RIVERLAND FOOD AND WINE TO VISITORS

Food and Wine Trail
This concept is already in place and it is proposed that more resources be given to
- Improving the merchandising of the trail,
- Production of a brochure more in keeping with market need and a focus on highlighting what there is to enjoy. Tourism Riverland will need to address how a more effective marketing tool can be produced which will be easily downloadable from the destination website
- Highlighting the Trail on the Food and Wine webpage
- To attract attention and increase appeal, some special offers to be included in the Trail brochure. Customers will need to present the Trail brochure at the food or wine business to access the offer.

Riverland Renaissance
To lift market awareness, in this plan it is proposed that a PR consultant be retained year round. This would enable the PR consultant to supply a PR plan to raise market awareness of this great event. The aim of this will be to also extend the number of venues involved and the duration of the event.

Another important aspect will be for the PR plan and for the Tourism Riverland marketing team to use this event to raise the Riverland’s reputation as a desired food and wine location.
Foodie Favourites
To ensure that families, budget travellers and low cost eating venues are not overlooked by this strategy, it is proposed that a “Foodies Favourite” program be developed along the lines of monthly special “Foodies Favourites” being offered by various eating venues. These would be collectively promoted through accommodation venues, VICs and the destination website.

Promotion would be by low cost promotional leaflet at reception areas of motels, caravan parks and other businesses happy to cross promote. The availability of the Foodies Favourites would be featured on the destination website and through other local avenues. Participating businesses might like to feature their “Foodie Favourite” in their place of business.

Cellar doors
It is essential that special efforts be made to raise awareness of cellar doors and what they offer. First it is proposed they be strongly featured on the destination website.

Tourism Riverland marketing would feature the cellar doors, their individual characters and any unique features on the destination website and in other market communication activities. They would be given prominence in any journalists or travel agent famil.

Cross promotion would be explored as a means of getting more visitors into cellar doors. In Margaret River, accommodation providers have arrangements with selected cellar doors where customers, on presentation of a room key or special introduction voucher, would gain some benefit like a free glass of wine with lunch, discounts on wine purchases or some other incentive.

When cellar doors launch a new feature or something that may have market interest, the PR consultant could be contacted to see what publicity support can be achieved for the winery.

With the E-Shop, cellar doors would be encouraged to list some of their products for online purchase and to promote the wine tastings available when visiting the Riverland.

Gourmet getaways
Both SATC and Qantas promote Gourmet Getaway packages for the Barossa and other wine areas of SA. Once the Riverland has embraced digital marketing technology, it will then be possible to have Riverland Getaway Gourmet packages developed in conjunction with third party distribution channels, tour wholesalers, an airline and an Adelaide based rental Car Company. The proposed new management team for Tourism Riverland would have the skills and expertise to set these up with cellar doors and accommodation properties. In doing so they would show the local industry how to use these skills and knowledge to develop other marketing initiatives.

Dine Around Riverland
The Riverland needs a brochure which can position the region as a leading dining destination. It needs to meet these needs

- Promote awareness that the Riverland is a great place to visit for food and wine experiences. This brochure would be downloadable through the destination website. Customers, travel industry and media will not have to go find it,
- The brochure must introduce business to Riverland food and wine establishments. This automatically means that if customers are going to come for a food and wine experience they will become customers of other services like accommodation,
- Most important will be to enhance the enjoyment of visitors coming for a food and wine experience.

While many visitors will obtain a copy of the brochure from the destination website, there will still be a need for hard copies for local distribution and during Tourism Riverland promotional initiatives.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

Riverland Wine and Food Guide
This is a splendid publication but changes recommended are

- The format changed from a product presentation to a market (experiences) approach
- Instead of being a catalogue format, the information to be presented in a more informal style highlighting the enjoyment factor,
- Introduce some merchandising initiatives like special offers, packaging with tourism products, value added offers and discount offers, and
- A less expensive production without losing the presentation impact.

It would be desirable to have it available for downloading from the destination website but the brochure may be too large.

Nightlife
The next Marketing Paper features initiatives to offer nightlife products for visitors. Most regional destinations perform poorly when catering to the needs of visitors at night. Dining is a main feature of the proposed plan.

There is also a Dine-Around-Dinner scheme copied from Norfolk Island.

This Nightlife Plan has been developed to enhance the enjoyment of visitors when in the Riverland and doing it in such a way that it adds to the local economy.

Media coverage
There are now many food shows on TV channels including Australian TV productions.

It is proposed that Tourism Riverland’s PR consultant explore how the Riverland can be included in programs like the Ch 7 Paul Mercurio Food Show he complies by touring around Australia.

In the same way, how can the PR consultant get the Riverland into print media coverage?

MAKING THIS ALL HAPPEN
There are three main organisations that need to come together to make this happen. They are

- Riverland Wine Industry Council,
- Food Riverland, and
- Tourism Riverland

It is proposed that these groups form an informal Food and Wine Council with each main group inviting others to participate as appropriate.

It would be the function of Tourism Riverland to marry together the food and wine elements to make the total marketing approach successful in key markets. Within the region the food and wine groups would manage the product delivery aspects.

By working together it is hoped that resources can be pooled and well coordinated for mutual benefit
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

Attachment C

NIGHTLIFE

An opportunity for the Riverland

Each night in most regional centres, visitors wonder what there is to do after dark. Usually they believe there is nothing to do to fill in the evening. As a result many grab a quick and convenient meal and retire to watch TV, read a book or mix with other travellers.

As a result
• Visitors tend to have a quiet evening not spending any money with local businesses that are open,
• Local businesses that are open are incurring operating overheads not knowing what customers will come in to provide revenues,
• The Visitor Economy misses the opportunity to be able to collect more revenue

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE RIVERLAND

To enhance the enjoyment for visitors and to improve revenue earnings for hospitality and other businesses, it is proposed that a special promotional plan be developed to target both visitors and local residents with details as to what is on offer to be enjoyed each evening.

This to be part of a special marketing plan to be undertaken in three phases

Phase One
To consolidate a list of all hospitality venues that are open together with details of activities that visitors can enjoy like the flood lit Murray River at Renmark Club, movie theatre, sporting facilities and local events where visitors are welcome.

This information to be summarised in a “customer friendly” leaflet to be release through accommodation providers, Visitor Information Centres and other outlets who would like to participate.

An important part of this plan is to promote this same information to the local community. It is likely many local residents would not be informed fully about all of the facilities available should they be interested in going out in the evening.

If increased patronage of local facilities can be achieved, this will have these benefits
• It will help Riverland businesses and their suppliers
• Businesses that are popular with locals are often perceived by visitors as a good endorsement,
• Visitors will be able to enhance the enjoyment of their visit to the Riverland.

Some merchandising initiatives that could be considered to attract attention for this initiative without increasing overheads would be
• Meet the chef nights. Restaurants could consider nominating quieter nights to come out after the main course and chat with the diners about the meals they serve. Perhaps the chef could prefer a sweets course in the restaurant. This would be a treat for visitors. If there are diners celebrating a birthday or anniversary, the chef could recognise them in some way. This could start by being a Tuesday night treat and promoted accordingly.
• Special offers. Travellers love a bargain. Another option is to make special offers on quiet nights like local wines at special prices free or even free with main course. Perhaps a local winery would like to do a wine tasting before dinner one night per week at a particular restaurant. These are indicative proposals, there are other options.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

These are proposals which are not “locked in stone” and would be flexible to meet changing circumstances.

Local residents
Perhaps local newspapers could help with this proposal particularly with boosting demand from local residents.

The proposed new destination website for the Riverland has a Nightlife section which is to be used to
- Promote nightlife hospitality and attractions for visitors, and
- Provide a download facility for details of nightlife features and services

Phase Two. – Enhancing the nightlife offerings.
It is proposed these concepts be considered as thought starters
- **Dine Around the Riverland.** This would be a place where restaurants from Renmark to Waikerie offer set menus for $20, $30 and/or $40 per person on set nights, say Monday-Thursday. The aim of this program will be to highlight the dining options available across the region in the evenings, say Monday-Thursday.
- **Introduce local musicians on a set night.** In the Riverland there would be some talented musicians and singers either soloists or groups who could be present on a set night to show their skills to visitors. This could be one night each week with the entertainers rotated. Rather than pay a fee, they might be prepared to perform for a meal and tips to help the community.

Phase Three. – Building Riverland’s reputation for it’s nightlife.
A concept is proposed which is based on a successful concept on Norfolk Island. The principle is that a set itinerary is set with all participants meeting at a start point at 7.00 am and go off in one vehicle. Hors d’oeuvres with welcoming drinks are served before boarding the vehicle which travels to another venue 10-15 minutes away for the main course. Then on to another venue for sweets and coffee. At each venue there are locals waiting to chat to the visitors. At Norfolk Island, the locals chat about the history and culture of the island. In the Riverland the locals could talk about a range of interesting local subjects which would interest the visitors.

This is a concept that a service club or other local group could undertake as a fund raising project for them. The venues for the catering could be worked out with the industry and Tourism Riverland and others could develop a suitable promotional program. This concept does not exist anywhere in Australia and could give the Riverland a competitive edge.

Events
With this whole program, all three phases, consideration should be given as to how events can be involved in night life activities for mutual advantage of the events and the Visitor Industry.

Longer term
In the longer term it will be necessary to keep coming up with new ideas to keep regenerating the region’s nightlife reputation. Helping the Renmark Cinema to be supported, to grow and develop further could only be a plus for tourism and the community.

**MAKING IT HAPPEN**
It is proposed that Tourism Riverland take the lead role working with
- Chambers of Commerce,
- Food Riverland, and
- Events organisers
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

HOUSEBOATS

Riverland houseboats losing to the competition
New marketing approach advocated

Houseboats are a very important part of the Riverland tourism industry. They provide

- An important point of difference with many other destinations. It is only a few locations in SA and Victoria that can offer this type of holiday,
- Riverland houseboats have advantages over other destinations with houseboats because they are located in some of the Murray River’s most majestic scenery like the Border Cliff and Waikerie Cliffs. There are also great expanses where water skiing and other water sports can be enjoyed without crowds
- Riverland houseboats travel on some of the widest parts of the Murray River
- Riverland houseboats holidaymakers can access a wide array of landside attractions ranging from the canoeing creeks near the Victorian border, tying up at the Renmark Club for lunch visiting the Loxton Historic Village, calling at Havenhand Chocolates at Waikerie, wandering through national parks and bushland or just barbecuing on sandy or grass shores,
- The range of houseboats ranges from small and intimate to large and luxurious.
- Houseboats can be hired from 12 locations in the region.

Sadly demand for Riverland houseboats has been in decline for several years for these main reasons

- The fall of consumer interest in the Riverland as a destination, and
- The lack of competitive standard marketing by Riverland houseboats.

While the houseboat sector can do little about destination marketing, it can become more active with sector marketing and certainly become more competitive with modern digital marketing complete with modern merchandising methods and new yield management practices.

It is proposed that Riverland houseboats adopt a new approach. Presently, it is relying too much on repeat customers, a declining market. It is also using 1990’s marketing methods that are no longer competitive.

RIVERLAND BRAND SUBMERGED

The Riverland brand has been submerged by SATC with its decisions to promote Murraylands and Riverland with a common brand, Murray River. Experienced tourism marketers would see this as a backward step. Customers choose to holiday at locations, not in stages or river areas per se.

Victoria and NSW have combined to promote Murray River holidays but they are getting it right by promoting locations as the main message with the Murray River in an endorsement role. Shown below is an advertisement which is one of a series which individually promotes Mildura/Wentworth, Swan Hill, Kerang/Koondrook/Barham, Echuca Moama, Cobram/Barooga, Yarrawonga/Mulwala and other towns. This is the same approach adopted by Queensland, NT, and WA where destinations like the Gold Coast, Whitsundays, Central Australia, Broome and Margaret River are promoted as destinations which is what customers are buying. State references are more an endorsement function.
The advertisement below illustrates the format used in Victoria.

The South Australian policy calls for the Riverland to become far more pro-active in key markets to combat its lost profile and this is particularly true for the houseboats which are sandwiched between two strong competitors, Murraylands near Adelaide and Mildura across the border.
MILDURA COMPETITION

There is wide opinion that many Adelaide and other SA residents travel through Riverland to holiday in Mildura. How many South Australians are choosing to holiday on Mildura houseboats instead of Riverland houseboats is not known as there has been no research.

Wilandra houseboats – setting the new benchmark for houseboat marketing

Wilandra has embraced modern marketing methods. They have recognised that other houseboats are not their only competition. They show an understanding as to how other tourism destinations and other holiday concepts are appealing to clients that they want so they have moved their marketing up to match the wider competitive situation by adopting digital marketing methods.

Shown below are screen grabs from their website www.willandrahouseboats.com.au  The first screen grab features a selection of four package offers

Please contact us about our great Mildura holiday and houseboat accommodation packages - designed to offer something for everyone!

**Family Fun Package**
4 nights
From $1500 per family (2 adults and 2 children)
[More>](#)

**Gourmet Getaway Package**
3 nights
From $750 per person, twin share
[More>](#)

**Mildura Golf Package**
4 nights
From $550 per person, twin share
[More>](#)

**Girls Pamper Package**
3 nights
From $850 per person (4 people minimum)
[More>](#)
Details of the Family Fun package are shown on this webpage

** Packages **

**Family Fun Package:** Four nights

Valid all year round

**Great value family fun for all to enjoy!**

**Package Inclusions:**
- 4 nights on board your choice of houseboat
- Gourmet barbecue, full breakfast provisions
- Dinner at Gol Gol Hotel
- Bottle of soft drink and local Mildura wine
- Fishing gear and pedal boat
- Sports equipment
- Games, books and videos, free kids showbag
- Moorings centrally located to Mildura City

**Price:**
- $1500* for 2 adults & 2 children (under 12) onboard a Deluxe houseboat—Albert James
- $2500* for 2 adults & 2 children (under 12) onboard a Luxury houseboat—Bushranger I or Reflection
- $3500* for 4 adults & 4 children (under 12) onboard a Super Luxury houseboat—Bushranger II, Casa Del Rio, Escape or Islander

Very significant is the introduction of online bookings (see next page) together with new pricing policies which allows customers to book for 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 or more nights.

Compared with Willandra, Riverland houseboats offer

- No packages,
- NO online booking facilities, and
- Only 7 day houseboat hires.

Like other choices available to customers, Willandra is far more “customer friendly” by allowing a range of choices for duration, packages and houseboat sizes.
Online booking screen grab

This screen format provides customers the following information so that they can make an instant booking.
Marketing Riverland holidays – Need to consider

Across the tourism industry in Australia and overseas today there is a trend to offer a bigger range of choice like cruise ships with more cabin categories. Many hotels offer a variety of packages and other marketing practices based on yield management price structures to target new customers.

If Riverland houseboats are to be competitive there is a need to consider businesses with a fleet of houseboats to copy the Willandra model.

However, smaller houseboat operators with only one or two houseboats should consider becoming part of a marketing alliance with other houseboat businesses still marketing their own houseboats but at then same time combining as an alliance to market their houseboats as a collective group. By so doing they will be able to rationalise their marketing budgets to give a greater market reach and be able to offer a greater range of choices for customers.

Third party distribution channels and soft period marketing

If Riverland houseboats are to win the support of third party distribution channels, to get their support, it is necessary that Riverland houseboats become familiar with modern merchandising and yield management methods.

It is necessary that Riverland houseboats be prepared to upgrade their marketing practices to tap into this business. In this regard, the role of the new management team at Tourism Riverland will be to work with those houseboat businesses who want to adopt these new methods.

An important benefit will be to bring new business to houseboat businesses that want to use these modern routines. Such marketing cooperation is that it will help Tourism Riverland to include houseboat product in houseboat sector programs and any wider Tourism Riverland campaigns scheduled during the year.

One benefit will be that with the use of digital marketing resources, it will be possible to target business for soft periods of the year. This will usually mean doing what many in the industry are doing and that is to use modern methods to attract impulse buyers.

Another benefit is that by using these new methods, the Tourism Riverland PR consultant will be able to pursue media publicity in SA and outside the state, sometimes linked to marketing campaigns, sometimes not.

LACK OF RESEARCH

A limitation on being able to develop a targeted marketing plan at this time is lack of reliable recent research. This is a standard practice by private sector managed commercial organisations but usually not tourism’s destination marketing.

Over recent times the region has suffered some adverse media reports about the Riverland. Also there has been an absence of any coordinated targeted integrated marketing designed to target business.

SATC Houseboat Industry Study 1997

The only research available has been kindly made available by Mr Peter Freeman, Above Renmark Houseboats. It is a copy of a 1997 Houseboat Industry Study conducted by SATC.

Extracts from the research are as follows
TARGET MARKETS AND POTENTIAL

Origin

Main origin markets as identified in the 1997 research were
- Adelaide and South Australia represented 60-76% of the total market

The 1997 survey of potential patrons (Adelaide residents only) indicated 91% have not been on a houseboat holiday and 51% of these would consider it.

Market appeal

The 1997 research showed that travel groups were identified were
- Mixed groups,
- Families with kids,
- Social groups

These groups therefore offered potential for marketing returns and promotions which should feature these groups.

Repeat Houseboat holidaymakers also offered potential

The 1997 research shows a wide appeal, with a range of potential markets and niches to target based on the above primary market segments.

Market niches/Opportunities

The reach identified repeat patronage as high but there are other specific niches/opportunities like
- Stress/escape seekers (those seeking tranquility and get away),
- Consumers seeking affordable holidays,
- Nature/environment lovers (those wanting to see River scenery, the best way to see the River Murray,
- Those seeking water based activities,
- Those seeking relaxing/recreational holidays
- Those seeking to spend time/socialise with friends/family/other relatives
- Adelaide residents (aged 40 and over, families and teenagers, professional/white collar/executives)

PULL FACTORS FOR GENERAL MARKETING ISSUES

Pull factors for use in marketing appropriate for market segments as identified by the 1997 research included
- Best way to see the scenery,
- Best way to see the River Murray,
- Relaxing and tranquil,
- Great way to socialise with friends, family, other relatives, make new friends,
- Close to places/attractons to visit
LINKAGES TO EMPHASISE

The 1997 research identified linkages with places and attractions which can be utilised in marketing to specific markets to extend the appeal of a houseboat holiday. They included

- Visiting wineries,
- Eating out at restaurants,
- Visiting reserves and conservation parks,
- Visiting Lake Bonney,
- Visiting orchards

The main themes being

- Wine
- Food, BBQ’s /
- Nature, and
- Agriculture.

Such themes could also be explored in terms of cooperative marketing with others

The 1997 research suggested other linkages with potential were

- Fishing (water based activities theme)
- Swimming (water based activities theme)
- BBQ’s /Picnics on banks
- Socialising (with people on own houseboat as well as people on other houseboats),
- Visiting Reserves and Conservations Parks (Nature theme)
- Visiting Lake Bonney,
- Visiting orchards (agriculture theme)

Points regarding competitiveness arising from the 1997 research

They include

1. Houseboating in South Australia is the “best way” to see the “Big River”,
2. Need to maintain and promote affordability of houseboat holidays for potential patrons,
3. Promote uniqueness of houseboat holidays,
4. Promote South Australia as THE place to houseboat,
5. Promote motivators identified in the research ,
6. **Do not become complacent, given industry is competing not just with other houseboat holidays but all “holidays” in general**
7. It is more difficult to organise a ‘group’ for a houseboat holiday than individual (family) holidays

Item 6 is highlighted because in 2011, this is a major factor in 2011 often overlooked
The 1997 research showed that the leading patron perceptions and attitudes on houseboat holidays were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>% Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best way to see scenery</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best way to see Murray River</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good for social groups</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good for families</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totally relaxing</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great for socialising</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel confident driving</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good for single people</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need a week</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendation

In view of the commercial importance of houseboats to the Riverland Visitor Economy and as there is a serious lack of knowledge of market attitudes towards houseboat holidays and Riverland houseboats in competition with other locations it would be a good investment to find $25,000 to fund research (four focus groups of different market segments) in Adelaide.

This research would be economical and can produce valuable information quickly.

OUTLINE MARKETING PLAN TO BOOST CASH FLOW AND LONG TERM GROWTH

Aims of houseboat marketing

The three aims of the new strategy for houseboat marketing will be to:

- Escalate market awareness about the wonderful experiences to be enjoyed when houseboating in the Riverland,
- Increase demand for Riverland houseboats all year round from SA and western Victoria markets, and
- Achieve better yields for houseboat businesses.

NEW MARKETING TOOLS

New marketing tools planned for houseboat sector marketing are as follows:

- A special webpage on the new Riverland destination website will be assigned to houseboats. This will have a motivational sell presentation along with features to be enjoyed cruising the Murray River in the Riverland.

  The website will provide links to individual houseboat business websites. It will also have the capacity to download promotional leaflets and brochures.

- The houseboat website will also be complemented with new online booking system for houseboats like the system shown above,

- A new 16 page houseboat brochure for Riverland’s houseboats which will highlight features to enjoy when houseboating on the Murray River in the Riverland, details of holidaying on a houseboat, rates and where they can be hired. The brochure to be available by downloading from the destination website.
Marketing initiatives to grow houseboat demand

Marketing initiatives to grow new demand for houseboats are envisaged as follows

- A special campaign in February 2012 to target new demand for February-March 2012 to get houseboats being hired with a soft period campaign. This will be based on traditional advertising because the new digital arrangements will not be in place. It is hoped the new destination website houseboat section will be operative and maybe the online bookings system. The new houseboat brochure should be ready.

- A winter campaign for June to August to be launched in May using the new houseboat website, online bookings

- Houseboat holidays to be incorporated in the wider Tourism Riverland marketing initiatives particularly the proposed major campaigns

- When the digital marketing facilities have been established and the databases developed, Tourism Riverland will then have the capacity to engage in targeted marketing designed to drive customers to houseboat holidays,

- Houseboat holidays as a subject can appeal to the media for editorials. The PR consultant would be asked to help with coverage for houseboat initiatives as they occur

- Another area where it will be possible to get low cost publicity coverage is through use of houseboat holidays as prizes for competitions. Prizes can be availed at times away from peak periods.

IMPLEMENTATION

Detailed planning and implementation for this marketing would be the function of the new management team (Sales and Marketing Manager), IT Marketing Manager, Marketing Support Manager and the PR consultant.

Tourism Riverland would work with the Houseboat Hirers Association and Riverland houseboat businesses to deliver this plan. It is designed to complement any marketing being undertaken by the Houseboat Hirers Association.
EVENTS

One of Riverland’s great strengths for the Visitor Economy.

Events also offer much social value for the community. The region already has a wide range of events each year in different categories as shown below.

From observations and discussions around the regions there are already a wide range of events but most suffer from

- Limitations on manpower to plan and stage the events,
- Limited resources to promote participation in such events,
- Some traditional events are incurring difficulties maintaining attendances and/or the skilled people to keep planning them,
- Events being scheduled on dates that conflict with other events. This puts a great strain on the limited capacity of the tourism industry especially the accommodation sector

Right now there are two areas which need greater support for their events. They are

- Motor sports, and
- Golf.

Further details are shown below.

WIDE RANGE OF EVENTS

The Riverland has a very wide range of events most of which have scope to attract many visitors from outside the region. This is an indicative list to show the variety of events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Santa’s Cave</td>
<td>Waikerie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lights Festival incl Santa’s Walk</td>
<td>Loxton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carols by Candlelight</td>
<td>Loxton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christmas Pageant and Fireworks</td>
<td>Barmera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>Irrigation/Steam Museum Open Day</td>
<td>Cobdogla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loxton Historical Village Alive Day</td>
<td>Loxton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting</td>
<td>Several motor sports events</td>
<td>Renmark, Barmera, Loxton, Waikerie, Blanchetown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dinghy Derby</td>
<td>Renmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual Rowing Regatta</td>
<td>Berri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music and entertainment</td>
<td>Live performances Chaffey theatre</td>
<td>Renmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country Music Festival and Awards</td>
<td>Barmera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Tractor Pull Rally</td>
<td>Waikerie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food and Wine Festival</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure pursuits</td>
<td>Balloon Festival</td>
<td>Renmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gliding Championships</td>
<td>Waikerie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no consolidated list for all events. When the new Riverland destination website begins, the events page should have a complete list in quick reference form. Not only will this list be of commercial importance with visitor enquiries but will prove invaluable to media and local community interest. Also it will help to monitor events for advance planning.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

CHALLENGES FACING RIVERLAND EVENTS
The challenges listed below are not exclusive to Riverland with the changing economic circumstances facing the community. Events are very much part of the fabric of the Riverland community and it’s future. There is a need for a new approach. Shown below are key challenges to be addressed but there are others

Limitations on manpower to plan and stage the events
Throughout Regional Australia, and Riverland is no exception, there has been an increase in the number of local events but due to a range of factors, the pool of experience needed to plan and stage events has been declining. Far too often a reducing number of people are being asked to carry a greater load. Staging events also calls for a strong band of volunteers and these are increasingly difficult to obtain. For these reasons, often events just have to fold.

Indications are that some of the traditional events in the Riverland are noticing falling attendance figures. What can be done about the problem? Each event is different and needs to be carefully studied for ideas that will stimulate interest.

In part the new Tourism Riverland could be a solution. It has been proposed that the new management team be recruited from outside South Australia. They are likely to bring knowledge of successful events elsewhere. The new destination marketing practices to be introduced could also offer promise for events. Even so, consideration should be given to Councils sponsoring study tours meeting event organisers on a needs basis. They would visit other parts of Australia to study how successful events are planned and staged particularly community events.

Limited resources to promote participation in such events
Events in the Riverland attract many patrons from outside the region. Loxton Christmas lights have attracted many out-of-town visitors for many years.

There are two limitations on regional event organisation committees for most regional events and it appears that the Riverland is no different. They are

- Often people with no marketing or promotional experience, and/or
- The organisation has little or no funds to promote the event

To address the problem with lack of experience, it is proposed that the new Tourism Riverland management team share their experience with organising committees and coach them with practical strategies that can help them get a “better bang for their buck” from their marketing dollars. With larger events there can be strong potential to attract visitors to the region, it may be possible for Tourism Riverland to enter into a cooperative campaign with the organisation committee. Should this happen, it might be possible to package local ground content with the event's admission price for sale on the Tourism Riverland online booking system. There is a range of options available in this regard.

Some of the events could be supported with publicity support from the proposed Tourism Riverland PR consultancy

With regard to having limited funds, there are some options
1. Shown below is a proposal for the Riverland Councils to adopt the Mildura Rural City Council scheme for funding support for events
2. Once Tourism Riverland introduces the digital marketing resources, there will be opportunities to use low cost digital promotional options to target certain outcomes,
3. With better staged and promoted events, it may be possible to attract more sponsorships and not just from local businesses, and
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

4. Introduction of the Mildura scheme will lead to organisation committees being able to take a more of a business approach to management which in turn can lead to new revenues opening up.

There are four websites listing Riverland events, a “plus” for the region
- totaltravel.yahoo.co.au
- about-australia.com
- aroundyou.com.au
- Riverlink.com.au

It is proposed that event organisers, the Events Development Committee and Tourism Riverland work closely with these websites with a view to listing as many events as possible.

Some traditional events are suffering from falling attendances
Some traditional events are incurring difficulties maintaining attendances and/or the skilled people to keep planning them. With any event, it can be difficult to sustain participation for various reasons like customer tastes changing, young children growing up with changing interests, community interests being changed by the impact of technology, influence of TV programs, other attractions offering competition, etc. There is no quick fix to this problem.

It is very challenging to maintain interest when market tastes are changing and new ideas are not coming forward because new blood is not being attracted to the organising committees. New approaches to the other problems of limited manpower to keep rejuvenating organising committees will certainly help in the short to medium term but for the long term, consideration needs to be given to importing proven event organisers who can input their experience.

There will be some concern about how the expense of professional organisers can be covered but the other option is to allow these events to die. Examine successful events and it will be seen that the more successful events have strong leadership and management with some expertise in organising in such a way that all involved are very enthusiastic about the event. By importing some paid expertise to provide guidance and take some of the organising responsibilities, it will be possible for locals to learn from the experience.

Events being scheduled on dates that conflict with other events.
Such scheduling conflicts put a great strain on the limited capacity of the tourism industry especially the accommodation sector. It neither helps attendances at event nor the local Visitor Economy to have these scheduling clashes.

There are two steps that are necessary to avoid date clashes. The first is to set event dates well in advance, 12 months ahead if possible. The other is to have a coordination committee with membership of all participating event organisations. It need not be some formal administration, just an informal structure. It is proposed that an Events Development Committee be formed, fostered by Tourism Riverland for the short term. It would have various functions as outlined below.

**SIGNATURE EVENTS**

For many travellers, events can provide added value to a visit, but they can be the main motivation for a visit.

There are many events in the Riverland each year, many reflecting a local sense of place, a distinctiveness which shows the Riverland to be somewhere special. There is a need to identify those events which merit the accolade of being “signature events”. They must be truly of the region and have the power to attract visitors and attention from outside the region and where possible, from overseas. Examples would be the SA Country Music Festival and Awards each year at Barmera and Loxton’s Christmas Festival.
EVENTS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

It is proposed that an Events Development Committee be formed with representation from each event or group that stages events e.g. Motor Sport, Golf, etc. Roles of this Committee will be to:

- Provide a forum to address problems that affect events generally,
- Examine as a group issues faced by all events organisations like funding, manpower, etc. It will provide a place where ideas and proposals can be discussed for mutual benefit,
- Act as the Diary Coordinator for all events. This would mean that the Events Development Committee would be responsible for the events diary and its promulgation wherever needed. Clashes of dates would be resolved by this Committee if affected events are unable to reach a solution on their own.

MILDURA COUNCIL EVENTS AND FESTIVALS GRANTS PROGRAM

In 1994, the Mildura Rural City Council decided to take a new approach to funding events and festivals in the best interests of the community and as a means of improving the value of events to the visitor economy, tourism being a beneficiary. The scheme has been very successful and still operates today. Over the years, the administration of the scheme has been fine tuned.

Twice each year, Council accepts bids for grants to for events and festivals. Each bid has to comply with a criteria laid down in the Application Form. This is used to assess what the event is designed to achieve for the community and the economy. After the event, grant recipients are obliged to submit a report as laid down by Council. This tells Council what patronage and revenues were achieved by the event. It is a regular feature of Council operations for an announcement to come from Council about the grant approved and the community benefits this achieved.

After the 2010 Stamfest held in Mildura when 130 racing cars and their crews met in Mildura attracting 3000 spectators, 745 from outside Mildura incl. Mt. Gambier, Canberra and Alice Springs. Mildura Council estimated that this contributed $2.5 million to the local economy. This was estimated from information provided by the event organiser. Since then Mildura Council has announced they are to spend over $1 million to upgrade the track at the motor sports venue in time for the 2011 Stamfest. The Mayor has also said on Mildura radio that Council is to look at even going further.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Mildura approach be considered by the Riverland Councils for local application.

Details of the scheme can be seen at www.mildura.vic.gov.au/Page/page.asp?Page_Id=171&h=0

There are three papers which can be downloaded:

- Funding Guidelines
- Application Form
- Grant Application Checklist
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

Attachment F

GOLF

Riverland has five superb golf courses, some with splendid club houses offering high standard on-course dining and on-course accommodation. What they don’t have is a volume of customers to help their financial position. They are all being under-utilised.

The recent economic setback for the rural and wine industries have impacted adversely on these fine community assets through loss of memberships. Added to this is the fall in revenues from visitors and the golf sector really has some problems.

Help is needed by the golf sector particularly the golf clubs that have to fund course maintenance and development largely from green fees.

SPECIAL PLAN

A special plan is needed to meet these outcomes

- Destination marketing designed to increase visitors to the Riverland by featuring golf as a feature attraction,
- These visitors becoming customers of golf courses producing more green fee revenues, supporting the club houses and staying in on-course accommodation. Accompanying partners who do not play golf could go off shopping or sightseeing

Need to recognise Riverland’s golf competition

There is much competition in the golf world today. It is worth looking at these websites

- www.southaustralia.com/BarossaGolf.aspx
- www.countryclubs.com.au/ This site is a MUST. On the navigation bar click on Clare Country Club and McCracken Country Club. Then visit /www.mccrackengolf.com
- www.novotelbarossa.com.au/play-golf.html Another MUST to visit. Note on home page a brochure download facility. Please download a copy and note the customer (market driven) focus in the text.
- www.barnbougledunes.com.au One of Australia’s top golf courses
- www.richriver.com.au

Key features of the special plan

Key features would be as follows

- The five golf courses to form a marketing alliance with Tourism Riverland. From this, a joint strategy would be developed aimed at bringing more golfers to the Riverland with the Regional Tourism Organisation using the experience of the new management team to help the Riverland golf group develop its marketing expertise
- The new Riverland destination website to give prominence to golf on the home page. This would have a direct link to the golf webpage
- Links to also be provided from the dedicated golf page direct to websites of each of the golf courses. Both the destination website and websites for each golf club would need to be upgraded to competitive standard to match the excellent golf websites above and others
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

- The present brochure produced by the golf clubs promoting golf in the Riverland to be upgraded with a market focus rather than a product focus. Also any events on the annual Riverland golf calendar open to visitors to be promoted in the brochure.

- An annual golf tournament is proposed as the key event to give profile to Riverland courses. Further details are shown below.

- A data base of golfers should be complied in time for use when Tourism Riverland establishes digital marketing capabilities. This could be complied from existing membership records but it will be important to start obtaining email addresses from visitors to the five courses for the database. To enthuse visitors to do so, monthly competitions could be offered which visitors to courses entering free and prizes could be a case of wine delivered to their home. Another method would be to promote competitions through golfing magazines.

- A program of packages in conjunction with local accommodation providers to be produced for two purposes. The first is that packages can be offered to travel organisations and local Riverland tourism industry entrepreneurs to use to attract business. It is interesting that in Mildura, Willandra houseboats offer a golfing package on their website as an attraction to attract houseboat hires. This would also be sold through the golf webpage.

The second use for packaging would be to plan a sales program targeting golf clubs in Adelaide and also promoted through RAA. It may be worthwhile to promote them next to golf editorial material in the Advertiser and/or Sunday Mail. Having special packages is a vehicle to get publicity and to raise the profile of the Riverland clubs. Without them, any marketing in Adelaide lacks the edge that is needed to gain attention.

- When digital marketing facilities become available from Tourism Riverland, it is proposed that the Riverland Golf Clubs work together with periodic special offers to their database to stimulate further demand. Also this method would be used to circulate e-newsletters from time to time just to maintain “top of mind” association of customers with the Riverland golf courses.

- Tourism Riverland’s PR consultant being based in Adelaide could develop initiatives to raise the profile of Riverland courses in Adelaide, regional SA and interstate.

Annual Golf Tournament

An annual golf tournament involving all five courses would not only attract extra green fees revenue but will also benefit the food, bar and accommodation operations on each course.

The marketing objective would be to “put Riverland golf courses on the map” with golfing enthusiasts. Being largely a motoring destination, throwing the golf clubs into the boot is not a problem and could lead to many other benefits from Riverland golf marketing.

It is proposed that the tournament be for five days with visitors playing on all courses each day. On the last night there would be a function to bring the tournament to a close.

A priority would be to get a sponsor from outside the Riverland who would be interested in the naming rights for the tournament. This would provide a base income to retain a professional organiser (probably based in Adelaide). With contacts in the sport and in the media.

Supporting these activities, other golfing sponsors could be interested if there was to be any TV coverage. In this regard, the professional tournament organiser is likely to have the contacts. In the first year, TV coverage is probably not likely but other media coverage may be possible. This should be pursued for its publicity value.

SATC has shown interest in sponsoring an event in the Riverland. Perhaps they may wish to sponsor this golf event for the first three years.
Riverland – Nature capital of South Australia

What other SA region can match the Riverland for its National Parks, Gluepot Reserve, Bookmark Biosphere, fabulous natural river features, native birds and animals?

Plus winding its way for 300km through the region is the mighty Murray River where nature so richly blesses so many leisure travellers.

What other region can match all this?

need for promotion at every opportunity

Nature and natural attractions are another great strength of the Riverland virtually unmatched by any other SA region but this is being taken for granted by folk in the Riverland. This is a competitive advantage and the Riverland needs to show great pride by highlighting nature and natural attractions at every opportunity.

This should be a prominent feature on major campaigns, generic promotion and sector marketing.

BIRDS

One of the world’s biggest travel markets is bird lovers or “Twitchers” as they are known overseas. Twitchers are birdwatchers whose main aim is to collect sightings of rare birds. Their interest also extends to watching other species in their habitat. Many bird watchers have the financial resources to travel all over the world and to go to remote locations like the Riverland to see birds that interest them.

In Australia there is a big population of bird watchers from all walks of life. Some are members of bird watching organisations but not all. They too travel all over Australia.

The Riverland has countless species of birds plus the magnificent Gluepot Reserve, a bird watchers paradise with an international reputation. The Riverland also has two bird hide facilities at Banrock Station and Burk Salter Winery.

To promote to the Riverland’s bird watching attributes, all that needs to be done at this stage is to ensure the new destination website has a comprehensive section on “Birds”. What is imperative is that the text and images are easily found by search engines. The text needs to use terms widely used by bird watchers with as many images of bird species labelled with the names of the birds.

RIVERLAND INDUSTRY INFRASTRUCTURE SERVING NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

There is a wide variety of visitors to the Riverland, who have differing interests in natural attractions ranging from travelling by canoe through the creeks to the north near Customs House and the Victorian border throughout the region to places like the Loch Luna Game Reserve which consists of a range of water bodies including narrow creeks and shallow swamps with breeding birds amongst the many other bird species plus kangaroos grazing beside the creeks.
Many are walkers who like to wander through the bush along walking trails looking at the trees and other flora, looking for animals in their native habitat and overall the natural environment fee of every day pressures. Catering for the many interests is a variety of infrastructure provided by Riverland businesses, some of which are very much feeling the affects of the severe drop in visitors. Some have had to resort to seeking external employment and cutting back on business activities to stay viable.

Many visitors like to base themselves on a houseboat and explore nature’s wonderful world in the Riverland. Others rely on the Big River Rambler cruises. Dinghy Expeditions, canoe and kayak hires, Loch Luna Cruises.

These facilities need to be highlighted on the new Tourism Riverland website

**STRONG EMPHASIS**

With the new Great Murray River Walk, houseboats marketing and other marketing activities, there needs to be an ongoing emphasis about the wonderful natural attractions of the Riverland at all times.

**PUBLICITY**

There is an endless list of subjects connected with Riverland’s natural attractions than can be exploited to attract publicity. The Tourism Riverland PR consultant should be used to place editorial material in consumer and specialist media.
Motor sports, to many not connected with them, is an unknown quantity as most are not familiar or lack an understanding as to what a motoring event can do for a local visitor economy.

Any town that has hosted a Vintage Car Rally or watched these beautiful old cars passing through will have seen just how much they are admired by the wider community. The Melbourne Grand Prix and the Clipsal 500 enjoy generous support from their State Governments because of wide community support and their economic value to the respective capital cities.

In the same way regional communities value their motor sports for the economic contribution they make to the local economy. This is illustrated by the list of examples shown below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slamfest (Mildura)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Economic value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130 racers and crews from around Aust</td>
<td>$2.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000 spectators, 75% from outside Mildura incl SA, Mt Gambier, Canberra and Alice Springs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildura works closely with Coonawarra, Whyalla, and Portland and would be happy to work with Riverland.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildura City Council recognises economic value and has agreed to budget upgrades to the Sunset Strip Raceway before 2011 event.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

**Big River Regional Street Rod Nationals (Riverland)**

2006
- Over 400 entrants from around Aust
- 31 trade stands and sponsors plus 14 variety stalls and 15 catering venues. Also a number of local sporting groups, schools and charitable organisations benefited financially by providing some of the catering
- 6000 spectators attended over 2 days, many from outside region

Economic value over $1 million

2012 Event to be staged again and predicted to be twice the size

**Bright Rod Run (Bright)**

2010
- 900 entrants
- 5500 spectators paid to enter a special presentation on Sunday
- Alpine Shire estimates over the event weekend, 15,000 visitors came to Bright
- Held annually for over 20 years
A very impressive part of this event is the large number of local sponsors (businesses) who contribute towards the cost of staging the event

Alpine Shire advises value to economy $3-3.5 million

**Summernats Car Festival (Canberra)**

1998
- 925 entrants
- 47,000 spectators

2008
- 1500 entrants
- 100,000 spectators

Estimated economic value $15 million

2011
- Event number 24
- Recognised as the largest car festival of any type in the southern hemisphere.

**4WD Muster (Barmera)**

Held annually in August (winter)

2010
- 200 entrants
- 600 spectators

2011 Expecting up to 500

**Ute Muster October Long Weekend (Deniliquin)**

1999 First time held
- 5000 attended

2009
- 10,152 attended

Estimated economic value $8-9 million

2010
- 22,000 attended. Higher attendance due mostly to leading band Cold Chisel entertaining crowd

Estimated economic value $13 million
### ARSF Street Rod Nationals (Geelong)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Economic Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2011 | - Over 1350 entrants (Hot Rods and Customs)  
- 10,000 spectators over the two days  
- 20 food and drink vendors  
- 70 trade stands offering products from parts to build a Hot Rod, Rock’n Roll clothing and much more. Sporting events had to be cancelled or moved because the Hot Rod Nationals had booked the city out. | Economic value over $3 million |
| 2013 | Each odd numbered year the “FULL” ASRF Street Rod Nationals are held.  
2013 will be held on the Gold Coast, Qld. | |

### Motor Sports Has a Great Future for Growth

The facts above indicate a strong future for these motor sports which increasingly attract growing numbers of visitors to regional centres:

- The Victoria Government has provided funding for new facilities for motor sports events in Mildura and Swan Hill.
- Events above show the growing interest in the sport.
- Both Mildura and Bright indicated that while the sport attracted interest from all ages, it is the 40-50 age group which dominates. Most are in a financial situation to be able to afford these expensive “toys” or just to be involved. Many travel around Australia to events throughout the year to participate and watch the cars in action.
- This sport is popular throughout all states and Territories of Australia and in New Zealand. Governments are taking a serious look at the need for venues for the sport. The Federal Govt has recently contributed $3 million and the Northern Territory Govt $1.5 million to upgrade the Hidden Valley International Dragstrip in Darwin. This will bring the facilities up to international standards and allow the hosting of ANDRA championship events featuring the high end class cars and teams.
- Drag Racing is a growth motorsport but is being restricted in south eastern Australia by the lack of ANDRA standard facilities to complete the true national championship series.
AUSTRALASIAN DRAG RACING ORGANISATIONS

Shown below are some of the Australasian Drag Racing Organisations. The peak body is the Australian National Drag Racing Association.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South Australia</th>
<th>Also</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crusaders Drag Racing Club</td>
<td>Auckland NZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drag Riders Association</td>
<td>Nelson NZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverland Motorsport Club</td>
<td>Pegasus Bay NZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA Drag Racing Association</td>
<td>Wanganui NZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Drag Racing Association</td>
<td>Wellington NZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel City Drag Club</td>
<td>Central Qld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Charters Towers Qld,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gympie Qld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballarat Drag Racing Club</td>
<td>Roma, Qld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Victorian Drag Cycle Club</td>
<td>Sunshine Coast, Qld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colac Drag Racing Club</td>
<td>Surfers Paradise, Qld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne Drag Racing Club</td>
<td>Warwick Qld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Coast Drag Racing Assoc</td>
<td>Bunbury WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunraysia Drag Racing Assoc Mildura</td>
<td>Western Drag Racing Assoc WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorian Drag Racers</td>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrnambool Drag Racing Assoc</td>
<td>Tasmanian Drag Racers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pro Stock Drag Racing Assoc of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrandera</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RIVERLAND - “MOTOR SPORT MECCA OF SA”

The Riverland is well placed to be regarded as the “Motor Sport Mecca of SA” but before achieving this and enjoying the fortunes of this situation, these important steps need to be taken:

- **Formation of a new coordinating group, the Riverland Motor Sports Council** as the peak body to assist and support the development of each different motor sport. This Council would work with Tourism Riverland for coordination of event dates, thus avoiding conflicting demands with other event organisations for accommodation and facilities that visitors need. Also Tourism Riverland may be able to assist with promoting the events to help maximise visitation by spectators and entrants from outside the Riverland.

- **Development of the Riverland Motorplex at Barmera.** This is a proposal for a new facility for Drag Racing to be developed on land behind the Riverland Exhibition Centre (Field Days Site) at Barmera.
This facility would augment the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Renmark Motorsports Complex</td>
<td>Speedway - Host to Juniors, Street stocks, super modified’s, super sedans, late models, lightening sprints, wingless sprints, 360 sprint cars, vintage/classic class, monster trucks, solo and side car bikes, quad bikes, jump race, caravan derby, tiny derby. There are currently plans in place to build a new speedway track that will host all the above plus 410 sprint cars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motorcross track - Host to numerous classes of dirt racing motor bikes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dirt Kart track - Host to numerous classes of dirt go-karts plus flat tracker motorbike events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loxton Dirt Kart Track</td>
<td>Host to numerous classes of dirt go-karts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan Dirt Kart Track</td>
<td>Host to numerous classes of dirt go-karts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan Motorcross Track</td>
<td>Host to numerous classes of dirt racing motor bikes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanchetown Dirt Kart Track</td>
<td>Host to numerous classes of dirt go-karts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waikerie Speedway</td>
<td>Host to Juniors, Street stocks, super modified’s, super sedans. Late models, lightening sprints, wingless sprints, 360 sprint cars, vintage/classic class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waikerie Off Road Track</td>
<td>Host to numerous classes of off-road racing cars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further details are shown below.

- **Modern approach to Speedway websites.** The present websites seem to be largely designed to serve existing motor sport enthusiasts who are familiar with programs for the Renmark and Waikerie venues but could be discouraging for any potential visitors who are planning ahead. More needs to be done to improve the customer friendly aspects of the websites. Improvements recommended are

  * Events dates published well in advance, 12 months ahead if possible. If not possible, outline details of planned events to be shown with approximate dates. Potential visitors might be more inclined to visit if events are given the appropriate exposure. Having no details can be a “turn off”,

  * “Selling” of an event can never start too early. Websites need to be presented in a format that excites potential visitors about what there will be to enjoy. Matter-of-fact presentations are usually functional but lack any excitement about the event which, for many, is part of the excitement and enjoyment. Raising the appeal of the event can only boost visitor numbers.
INFRASTRUCTURE GAP TO BE FILLED BY RIVERLAND MOTORPLEX

The Riverland currently lacks a suitable venue for Drag Racing. The nearest venues are Whyalla and Mildura. This is a growing sport and could support between 6 and 10 large events each year with the potential to generate large economic benefits for the Riverland economy.

**Bonus features of the proposal**

Features that will contribute to the venue’s viability

- The Motorplex is geographically well situated at Barmera close to supporting facilities for visitors. It will be easily accessible off the major highway linking Eastern and Western Australia so enticing racers from the east and west.

- Its location adjoins the north western boundary of the Riverland Exhibition Centre (Field Days Site) which will provide ample parking for Motorplex patrons. Furthermore the facilities of the two venues when combined will not be equalled anywhere else in Australia, thus providing a venue with enormous potential that is yet to be explored.

- Other community groups are keen to support and take advantage of the proposed development. Already the Riverland Cycling Club has indicated their interest and others will become known as the Motorplex takes shape.

- Driver education and training is becoming an important contemporary community need and the development of this facility will include the necessary elements to conduct “hands-on” driver education. This may become a major use for the facility with race meetings and other activities scheduled in between. One government department in the Riverland alone spends over $100,000 per year on driver training for its’ employees outside the region. This could provide a valuable revenue contribution to operating overheads.

**FUNDING FOR THE RIVERLAND MOTORPLEX**

The Riverland Motorsport Club have been meticulous about the planning and approval stages and already has

- A Feasibility Study produced in 2007, and

It may be prudent to seek funds to have these reports updated.

To fast track development of this complex, the first need is a grant of $1.2 million from the Riverland Futures Fund which will allow construction of the main Drag Racing track and supporting facilities in time for the 2012 Big River Regional Street Rod Nationals (see report
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

above for the 2011 Nationals held at Geelong which generated over $3 million for the local economy).

Further facilities required for the Motorpolex to become fully operational and capable of returning major economic benefits for the investment are

- Overhead lighting for the track and spectator areas,
- Public toilets,
- Garage building for maintenance of racing cars out of the weather,
- Hall for catering and display areas for exhibitors (an important source of income for operating budgets),
- Committee offices for managing events and other administration,
- Some of these facilities will also be utilised in driver education and training
- Hard standing area for entrants which can also be used for community driver training tuition, and
- Landscaping of venue and spectator areas.

It is expected that operating revenues and sale of sponsorship opportunities will generate incomes to cover all operating expenses.
MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

This is a market which offers long term promise for the Riverland but it is very competitive. Getting market share is not easy; it is a very competitive segment of the tourism industry.

The formation of Tourism Riverland will provide an opportunity to establish a strategy to attract meetings clients now and building demand for sector growth in the years ahead.

Infrastructure in the region presently will limit the market to small meetings up to 100. When planning meetings and conferences most meeting planners have two basic needs
- A meeting room, and
- Separate capacity for meals and/or refreshments.

Meeting facilities without capacity for meals particularly will always be a limitation on winning meetings and conference business

IMPORTANCE OF MEETING PLANNERS

The key decision makers who decide where the meeting will be held are the meeting planners. They choose a venue and a destination that suits their needs best. If they are not confident the venue is suitable they will go elsewhere.

Once the venue has been announced, it largely becomes the meeting planners who work to maximise delegate attendance. Sometimes they ask the host venue to help with promoting the destinations.

MEETING FACILITIES

There is a need to catalogue just what meeting facilities are available together with their meeting planner needs such as
- Meeting equipment hire facilities,
- Facilities for meals and refreshments,
- Social activity facilities,
- Accompanying delegate options,

This information should be assembled in a format consistent with normal convention industry practices.

Meeting venue options

For small commercial meetings, the Riverland has a range of larger houseboats which would be very suitable for business meetings. Perhaps two houseboats in tandem would be needed on some occasions. Having access to the Woolshed Brewery would be a “plus”, this could be appealing for this market.

LONGER TERM PLANNING

For larger conventions, it will be difficult to persuade meeting planners to choose the Riverland because it is only accessible by road. Many delegates prefer to fly into the venue location in aircraft that are no smaller than a Dash 8.

Shown below are details of the criteria needed for a convention centre in the region to be successful. There are many meeting venues around Australia today that have become a drain on Council finances because expected utilisation has not eventuated and the deficit is being funded by Councils each year.
Riverland Tourism Development Plan

Broken Hill has a splendid format which the Riverland could consider. It is a combined meeting facility and community facility

**CRITERIA FOR A SUCCESSFUL CONVENTION CENTRE**

For any convention centre to be successful, it needs to satisfy the following needs for meeting planners:

- Will the logistics for meeting planners and convention organising committees be easy and convenient?
- Does the destination have appeal to delegates and accompanying delegates?. Well known destinations tend to be more successful,
- For accompanying delegates and social programs, what local facilities are available?
- What support is the Regional Tourism Organisation giving to the bid for the meeting,
- What support will be available from the Regional Tourism Organisation or other group to attract interest in attendance of delegates,
- Economic considerations for the meeting planners organisation that will have to fund any operating shortfalls e.g. low attendances?
- For the host destination, the economic considerations associated with the fact those meetings and conventions are a very seasonal industry. How does the venue earn incomes when meetings and conferences are not being held?

**First step**

Before any move is made to proceed with a Convention Centre, a feasibility study should be commissioned. This should seek input from the following organisations:

- Adelaide Convention Bureau which acts on behalf of Adelaide and regional meetings,
- Broken Hill City Council,
- Albury City Council (Albury Convention Centre),
- Shepparton City Council (Shepparton Convention Centre).

**Meeting planning requirements**

Most common interest meetings consider the following:

- A plenary hall for opening and closing sessions, perhaps some other sessions,
- Complementary dining facilities for meals and refreshments,
- Suitable options for events out of the venue like cocktail parties and dinners,
- Break Out rooms,
- Facilities for the meeting planner to manage the event at the venue,
- Appeal of the venue location to delegates,
- Access to the destination.

**Delegates**

Popular destinations usually have an edge on other centres. While the convention program is important to their attendance, being held at an appealing location is a plus.

Organisers often like to plan social programs away from the conference venue.

Popular destinations are more successful at attracting accompanying delegates.

**Winning the bid**

Meetings and conventions are very competitive. They represent considerable revenue for meeting venues and local businesses, winning the bid to attract the event to the Riverland will
call for experienced marketing activities. Careful consideration should be given as to who and how the business will be secured.

**Economics**
While building a convention centre needs careful consideration, meetings and conferences can attract huge injections into the local economy and for local businesses such as equipment hirers, caterers, coach companies, cruise operators, retailers etc.
ACCOMMODATION

Investors are shying away from investing in tourism infrastructure.

Poor returns and poor industry management are the main deterrents

At any destination, accommodation providers are the biggest sector in terms of capital investment. A challenge for this sector is maintaining yields at a level which can fund marketing and refurbishment. Because visitor levels have fallen so significantly and tariffs could not be increased to cope with rising operating costs, many businesses have just not had the capacity to operate their businesses normally.

Business owners that want to sell and move out of the Riverland have been unable to do so because of a lack of interested buyers. This is resulting from the poor business performance of the industry private sector and the reluctance of banks and investment capital providers.

The current situation is that the most urgent needs of the Riverland accommodation sector are

- More customers paying better yields,
- Knowing how to attract more customers in the 21st century digital marketing era, and
- What the Regional Tourism Organisation is planning to do to drive more customers into regional tourism businesses, particularly the accommodation sector.

There is a view with some in the public sector that more product will stimulate demand. Anyone with this view is clearly signalling a lack of understanding of the business aspects of tourism. These same public sector people are disciples of the old fashioned view that new product brings new business but they never explain how customers in distant markets are attracted by new product. Do you ever hear of someone in the Riverland saying they must rush over to Bendigo or anywhere else for a holiday because they have a new motel?

Southern Ocean Lodge, Kangaroo Island is a magnificent luxury resort opened two years ago and expected to do wonders for the Kangaroo Island tourism industry. Reports circulating in the tourism industry indicate that patronage levels are far below expectations and profitability is down even after a huge advertising campaign in SA and other states. Some industry reports indicate that because the SA Government is financially connected in some way, the State Government is bearing the brunt of its operating losses. While these are unconfirmed reports, they are circulating widely in the tourism industry.

TOURISM PLAN IN OUTLINE

For the accommodation sector, the issues which will help these businesses to return to more prosperous operations as quickly as possible are

- Creation of Tourism Riverland as an autonomous, independent private sector managed Destination Marketing Organisation at Board and management levels,
- The new management team to help industry stakeholders to embrace digital marketing as quickly as possible. Also to help these same stakeholders to develop better merchandising skills and modern yield management practices,
- An important step forward will be to upgrade the region’s approach to online bookings and to ensure that the destination website and as many tourism businesses as possible have this new and essential business tool. Part of this will be to ensure that tourism businesses embrace channel management arrangements so that they can access new third level distribution channels,
- With these skills and expertise, tourism businesses will be able to extract maximum benefit from the destination marketing strategies of Tourism Riverland. In reverse, the Destination Marketing Organisation needs support from tourism businesses to ensure the new destination marketing strategies are effective and competitive,
Tourism Riverland to develop business driven campaigns in close cooperation with industry stakeholders so the needs of tourism businesses are addressed,

Tourism Riverland will introduce integrated, targeted, cooperative marketing with industry stakeholders from within the region and industry contacts outside the region like rental car companies, airlines, etc to rationalise resources to achieve maximum market impact,

Tourism Riverland will be working closely with accommodation providers to get their products into third party distribution channels to open up new business opportunities,

A new approach to events is proposed which will remove clashes of dates which put enormous strain on accommodation providers who miss out on other business which cannot be accommodated in the region at that time,

With events, a new approach is envisaged where there will be closer liaison between Tourism Riverland and events organisers to help build better events attracting more visitors

It is proposed that Tourism Riverland appoint a PR consultant who can work with the media to get publicity in consumer and trade media for new initiatives coming from the Riverland. The PR consultant will be working towards business driven outcomes not just destination promotion.

**ACCOMMODATION NEEDS OF THE REGION**

In the first instance, the need is to restore prosperity to the accommodation sector so that confidence of investors and capital funding sources is also restored.

Taking a longer view, improving profitability will help accommodation providers to allocate increased funds for marketing including supporting destination marketing. They should also have funds for refurbishing which is urgently needed in many instances.

If there is a proven market for a 5 star property or even more 4 star accommodation, then a strategy should be developed to identify this potential and some preliminary marketing undertaken.

Targeting a better share of the meetings and convention market would be a first step because a 4 or 5 star property that can cater for meetings can use the same facilities for community occasions.

Having a 4 or 5 star property would add to the image of the region.

No assessment was made of the bedstock throughout the region beyond identifying that there are some superb 5 star products like the new Pike River Luxury Villas which are outstanding.

**PROMOTION OF RIVERLAND ACCOMMODATION**

A real need exists to consolidate a list of all accommodation across the region and to prepare for listing on the new destination website. Initially it is recommended that every property be listed at no charge to ensure that website visitors realise the wide scope of accommodation that is available. A side benefit will be that the website will prove itself and after 12 months, when accommodation properties will be financially stronger they could be charged for their entry plus any extra charges for priority listings or paid advertisements on the website.