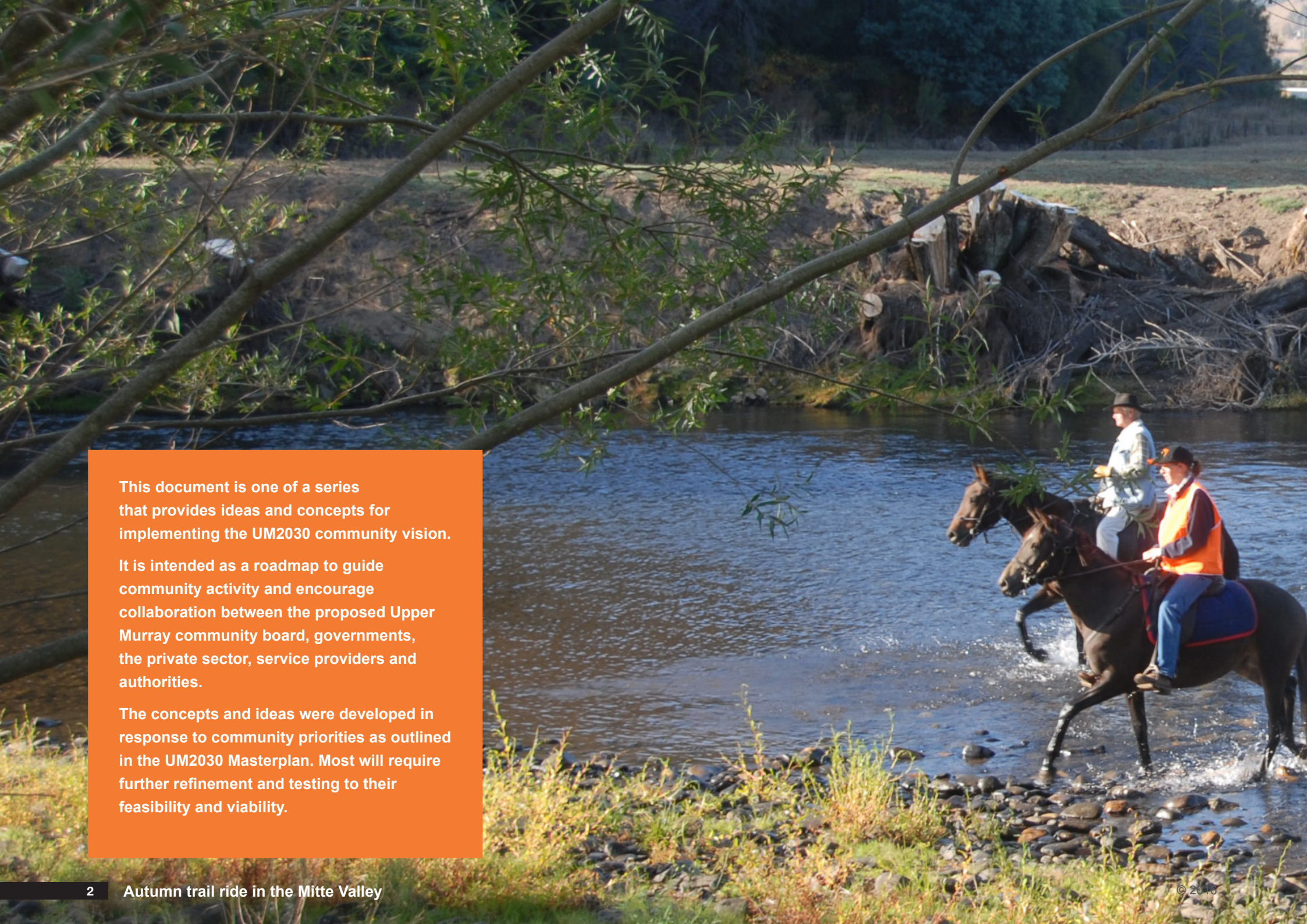




UPPER MURRAY

TOURISM 2030

A photograph of two people riding horses through a river. The riders are wearing riding attire, including helmets and jackets. The horses are dark-colored and are wading through the water, which is splashing around their legs. The background shows a rocky riverbank with some trees and a large log. The scene is set in a natural, outdoor environment.

This document is one of a series that provides ideas and concepts for implementing the UM2030 community vision.

It is intended as a roadmap to guide community activity and encourage collaboration between the proposed Upper Murray community board, governments, the private sector, service providers and authorities.

The concepts and ideas were developed in response to community priorities as outlined in the UM2030 Masterplan. Most will require further refinement and testing to their feasibility and viability.

UM2030

The Upper Murray 2030 Vision Plan is a community planning project which set the scene for the future of the Upper Murray Region.

The directions of UM2030 have been firmly driven by the community. This documents supports the UM2030 objectives:

The Upper Murray 2030 Vision Plan sets out a clear path for the future that influences government decisions

Tourists are welcomed to the Upper Murray; tourist amenities are well signposted, well maintained and provide benefit for the local community

The Upper Murray offers a diverse range of employment opportunities

TOURISM

The purpose of this document is to highlight specific opportunities to further grow the Upper Murray as a tourism destination. Key steps which should be undertaken to further explore these opportunities are also set out.

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

Establishing additional tourism products within the Upper Murray was seen as a critical initiative by the community. These projects should aim to:

- Develop unique experiences which showcase the region's natural beauty
- Compel visitors to travel the extra distance to explore Upper Murray's hidden gems.
- Provide a knock on economic effect to the whole Upper Murray region through the provision of jobs and other opportunities
- Establish a high quality 365 day a year tourism product in the region

THE UPPER MURRAY

TOURISM CONTEXT

The Upper Murray Region is located on the Victorian-NSW border at the foot of the Snowy Mountains and the starting point of the Murray River.

The region is famous as the home and final resting place of the 'Man from Snowy River' legend Jack Riley. The Man from Snowy River Museum is located in Corryong and features relics and stories unique to the Upper Murray. The Man from Snowy River Bush Festival is the largest event in the region and draws over 10,000 visitors from across Australia to celebrate bush culture.

The greatest drawcards for the region are its spectacular views and expansive natural assets, which present fantastic opportunities to stay and explore the region. The major attractions include:

- Mt Mittamatite (and Mt Mitta Mitta (Mittamitite) Regional Park)
- Burrowa-Pine Mountain National Park (including Bluff Falls and Pine Mountain)
- Khancoban Pondage
- The Murray River

- Avondale Gardens
- Snowy Mountains
- Alpine Valleys
- Victorian High Country Road
- Authentic Country Pubs
- Golf Courses with views of the Murray River and other breathtaking scenery
- Other creeks and rivers throughout the region.

Popular activities include sight-seeing, touring, bushwalking, fishing, four-wheel driving, and water sports. There are also more adventurous sports such as white water rafting, rock climbing and paragliding. During the winter months the region is a popular base for skiers due to its proximity to the snowfields.

The region is also a golfer's paradise, with quality courses at Corryong, Walwa, Khancoban, Tintalra and Welaregang. Each course offers 9 holes and the Khancoban Country Club has grass greens.

There is significant opportunity to further grow the Upper Murray as a tourism destination. Although the largest constraint for tourism remains the distance to

major cities and tourism markets, the development of unique experiences which showcase the regions natural beauty and local communities will compel visitors to travel the extra distance to stay and explore Upper Murray's hidden gems.

Based on data from Tourism Research Australia, the Upper Murray Region receives an average of 211,000 domestic visitors annually. This is made up of 113,000 day trip visitors, and 98,000 overnight guests. In addition to these figures a large number of visitors stop in the region heading towards other destinations. This is due to the Upper Murray's position within the broader High Country Tourism Region, which receives over 2.3 million visitors annually. If the Upper Murray can capture a greater share of visitors to the wider region, even if just a small proportion, it will have a large impact on local visitation.

Other market opportunities include the larger regional centres located close to the Upper Murray Region which may provide a more immediate market opportunity to grow visitation. Albury-Wodonga and Wagga Wagga in particular are located within an accessible distance.





EXISTING EVENTS

MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER BUSH FESTIVAL

THURSDAY 31 MARCH - SUNDAY 3 APRIL 2016

The Man from Snowy River Bush Festival is held annually in Corryong and has been running for twenty years. The festival is an incredible display of horsemanship, bush poetry, art, music and traditions and bush skills, based on Banjos Patterson's epic poem, *The Man From Snowy River*. 2016 was the Festival's 21st year running and is a celebration of the 'Year of the Gold Rush'. The festival attracts over 20,000 visitors to the region annually and is a fantastic asset.

More information about the Festival can be found on their website:

- www.bushfestival.com.au

UPPER MURRAY CHALLENGE

OCTOBER 2016

The Upper Murray Challenge is a competitive sporting event for individuals and relay teams. The event commences in the main street of Khancoban, and spreads across the foothills of Mt Kosciuszko.

The three events comprise:

- Mountain bike ride through the Snowy Mountains Climbing School (38 kilometres)
- Meek Kayak Paddle through the Swampy Plains River (26 kilometres)
- Run over the Murray River flats to finish at Corryong (7 kilometres).

More information about the Challenge can be found on their website:

- www.uppermurraychallenge.com

OTHER EVENTS

There is a constant calendar of events running all year round in both Towong and Tumbarumba Shires. Below is a list of some key events, however the most up-to-date information can be found on their websites.:

- Local golf and fishing competitions
- Seasonal and ongoing farmers' markets
- Ski season
- ANZAC and Remembrance Day celebrations and memorial services
- Australia Day celebrations and events.

Council event websites:

- <http://www.visituppermurray.com.au/>
- www.visittumbashire.com.au

*See relevant Council website for more detailed event information and location details.

JAN - FEB	MAR - APRIL	MAY - JUN	JUL - AUG	SEP - OCT	NOV - DEC
Tumbarumba Rodeo	Corryong Agricultural and Pastoral Show	Rosewood Fireworks	Ski season (Thredbo and Selwyn skifields nearby)	Corryong Historical Machinery Club Annual Rally	Garden Getabout, various gardens throughout Corryong and Surrounds
Corryong Cup Hangliding Competetition	Towong Cup Races	Fishing Season Closing Activities	Carcoola Art Show	Cudgewa Springtime Market	Khancoban Fishing Challenge
Tumbarumba Zone 20 Pony Club Camp	Mighty Mitta Muster	Ski season opening (Thredbo and Selwyn skifields nearby)	Tumbarumba Woodland Film Festival	Corryong Historic Machinery Club Annual Rally	Tumbarumba Bridge Congress
Corryong Agriculture and Pastoral Society Show	Mitta Valley Art and Photography Show	Queen's Birthday Long Weekend – Opening Snow Season		Tumbarumba Health Expo	Remembrance Day Services*
Tumbarumba Cup Races	Bethanga Gymkhana Sports and Family Fun Day	Rosewood Fireworks		Upper Murray Challenge	Rosewood Rodeo & Team Penning
Tumba-fest Food and Wine Festival	Eskdale Easter Fete			Fishing Season Opening Activities	Nariel Creek Folk Festival, Nariel Creek Reserve
Cudgewa Fishing Classic	Tooma Easter Saturday Gymkhana			Khancoban Pre-School Art Show	Local Christmas Carols and Markets*
Tumbatrek	The Man From Snowy River Bush Festival			Khancoban Poker Run	
Rosewood Stockman's Challenge	Jingellic Show			Tumbarumba Tastebuds	
Tumbafest	Rosewood Tractor Pull, Truck & Car Show			Tallangatta Tall Trestle Treadle	
	Man From Snowy River Bush Festival				



TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

UPPER MURRAY GRAN FONDO CHALLENGE

A range of exciting events are on offer across the region, but greater diversity still will attract a broader group of visitors to the Upper Murray. The Upper Murray region is blessed with unique landscapes and an undulating road network which makes it well suited to road cycling.

The Upper Murray Gran Fondo Challenge would be a one day cycling classic to attract recreational cycling enthusiasts. The route selection would highlight the diverse landscape of the Upper Murray, cross the state boundaries, and include a number of challenging climbs.

A draft route may run through:

Corryong > Cabramurra > Tooma > Towong > Khancoban

This may be held as a lead up event to the 7 Peaks Alpine Ascent Challenge cycling event which is held in the Alpine region every year in March, and is marketed as one of the most challenging road cycling events in the world.

The 7 Peaks Challenge has sold out in the last few years and in 2015 attracted 1,800 riders including

participants from overseas. The economic impact of the 7 Peaks Challenge is estimated to be over \$2.5 million every year to the regional economy.

The event will put the region on the map in terms of cycling and assist in building cycling tourism to the region during other times of the year.

The event would need to be delivered through a private operator but supported through public sector planning and funding.

Opportunities also exist to promote leisure cycling and mountain bikes, other high-intensity adventure events such as *Tuff Mudda* as well as lower-intensity running, walking or trekking tours and competitions. Khancoban Country Club has an established mountain bike course and Mt Mittamatite has been identified as another potential site.

KEY STEPS:

- 1 Establish working group;
- 2 Identify and confirm route proposal;
- 3 Approach event organisers to test interest;
- 4 Seek private/public sector funding;
- 5 Establish a business case.



UPPER MURRAY ADVENTURE WILDERNESS LODGE

The Upper Murray's rugged wilderness was identified as the major tourism drawcard for the region. Activities such as fishing, hunting, bushwalking, four-wheel driving, and watersports are popular among visitors. Other more adventurous sports such as white water rafting, rock climbing, all seasons mountain biking, and paragliding are also growing in popularity.

There is opportunity for the establishment for an integrated wilderness lodge which can be used as a base to for nature-based activities in the region. Due to the proximity of the region to the ski fields the lodge may also be used as a base for skiers during the winter months, with Khancoban being ideally for this purpose.

Khancoban is an established hub for tourism activity. The caravan park has recently been upgraded and Tumbarumba Shire has plans to improve the shopping centre and town entrance. Opportunities exist for investors to purchase and upgrade vacant accommodation facilities on private land.

The limited size and diversity of accommodation was identified as an issue that should be addressed in order for tourism to improve in the Upper Murray. Responses to surveys and community consultation workshops suggested the Upper Murray should be known for 'active and adventure experiences' and that combined tourism and agricultural industries should also be fostered.

The potential to convert a heritage building or existing accommodation into a wilderness lodge was raised during the community workshops and is being actively investigated by one potential investor.

Sites along the Murray River which provide views to the Snowy Mountains would be the ideal location for a lodge. It may provide a combination of accommodation options including self-contained cabins and campsites.

KEY STEPS:

- 1 Identify potential sites
- 2 Undertake feasibility study
- 3 Promote to investors/operators



BURROWA PINE MOUNTAIN AND MITTA MITTA PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The Burrowa Pine Mountain National Park, Mount Mitta Mitta (Mittamitite) Regional Park and Kosciuszko National Park are important natural assets in the region and there is opportunity to leverage further tourism visitation to the Parks. There are a number of improvements to visitor infrastructure which could be implemented including:

Development of short walks;

- Camp sites;
- Lookouts;
- Signage and interpretation; and
- Picnic areas.

As these parks are in close proximity to Corryong and the Murray Valley Highway, Khancoban and the Alpine Way, the improvement in visitor facilities will encourage more visitors to stop over in the region or stay overnight.

KEY STEPS:

- 1 Establish working group with Parks Victoria
- 2 Undertake a Masterplan
- 3 Detailed design of Masterplan elements
- 4 Seek funding through a business case





Great Alpine Walk

LOCAL TOURS

Community-led tourist experiences which showcase the ‘hidden gem’ experiences across the region provide a good opportunity for development. These types of local tours align with the growing tourist demand for more authentic and immersive experiences. A number of locals have already expressed an interest in operating a local tour. Tour opportunities may include:

- Food experiences which showcase the ‘paddock to plate’ and ‘slow food’ movement in the region. These experiences would highlight local producers and the quality of local produce in the region
- Fly fishing and hunting tours
- Four-wheel drive tours
- Horse rides
- Off-road cycling
- Canoeing and kayaking
- Horse riding tours and trail rides
- Running, walking and trekking/bushwalking tours.

The introduction of tours should be staged to develop the market and establish certainty about when visitors will be able to book tours. For example, initially tours may be held every Saturday.

These services may be promoted and booked through the Towong Shire or Tumbarumba Shire Councils’ Visitor Information Centres, their respective tourism websites, or a combination of both.

KEY STEPS:

- 1 Appoint a consultant to assist in preparing a program to inform and advise on tour development
- 2 Undertake a community forum/ educational session promoted to interested stakeholders. This may include case studies and guest speakers who have experience in tour operation (e.g. Both Feet).



HIGH COUNTRY RAIL TRAIL EXTENSION

The High Country Rail Trail is a recreational trail which stretches from Wodonga to Tallangatta, and recently new sections of the trail have been opened around Shelley. According to Bicycle Victoria surveys, the trail currently receives approximately 10,000 riders per annum.

The trail has potential to one day be extended all the way to Corryong which could mean a total trail length of 112 km encompassing 18 tressel bridges. This would rival the Murray to Mountains and Great Victoria Rail Trail. There is a network of active community groups which are working to improve the trail, while both Tumbarumba Shire Council and Towong Shire Council have invested in the development of strategic areas of trail to boost visitation into major townships. As a large proportion of the trail runs through Crown and private land, private landholders and government authorities are key stakeholders in any proposed developments.

KEY STEPS:

- 1 Engage with community groups working on the rail trail
- 2 Build business case for strategic enhancements to the trail
- 3 Engage with public and private land owners as needed



DEVELOPMENT OF TOURING TRAILS

The Upper Murray's scenic vistas and diverse landscapes provide a number of opportunities for the development of touring trails. Touring trails can encourage visitor dispersal, visitation to smaller villages, and leverage from passing traffic which are travelling between major destinations. In addition to the Snowy Valleys Way, the major opportunities to develop touring trails through the region include the following.

ICONIC GREAT RIVER ROAD TOURIST DRIVE

The Murray River Road stretches from Albury to Corryong following the curves and bends of the Murray River. The road offers the best touring experience of the Murray River coupled with the spectacular snowy mountains in the backdrop. The road links a number of smaller villages such as Walwa, Jingellic, and Tintaldra which make for pleasant stopovers.

This project is described in more detail as part of the UM2030 Great River Road concept plan.

THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER ROAD

There is opportunity to develop a Man from Snowy River touring drive which would link Canberra and Bairnsdale. The drive could build on the work of the Snowy Valleys Way, using the Alpine Way to move between Gundagai and Beechworth. The Benambra-Corryong Road could be promoted as providing the easiest navigable link between Gippsland and Canberra. It is a highly scenic route but requires some sections of the road to be sealed.

UPPER MURRAY VILLAGE TOURING TRAILS

There are a number of smaller villages in the region which have charming streetscapes and heritage buildings (e.g. Cudgewa, Walwa, Tintaldra). There is opportunity to link these villages with a number of touring trails which highlight local produce, vistas, national parks, pubs, and historical sites.

KEY STEPS:

- 1 Establish working group
- 2 Map routes
- 3 Identify sites of interest
- 4 Identify gaps in product
- 5 Develop collateral



FISHING IN THE REGION

Due to its iconic landscapes and abundant rivers and lakes, the Upper Murray region is already a well known recreational fishing destination, particularly for fly fishers. According to Tourism Research Australia, approximately 20% of visitors undertake recreational fishing, equating to 42,000 visitors per annum. Towards 2030, the region has an opportunity to expand and capitalise on this industry to also increase tourism revenue, visitation and jobs associated with a growing market.

With the ongoing popularity of recreational fishing and its significant contribution to the regional economy, more infrastructure could be provided to ensure anglers continue to have access to a pristine and quiet fishing environment, while benefiting from the visitation numbers. As demand increases there will also be a need for environmental management, fish restocking and careful monitoring to ensure visitation does not degrade the waterways and riverbanks in the region.

Guided tours along the rivers could help support fishing in the region, while helping to minimise waste and pollution of the waterways. A flow-on

effect from a stronger and more visible recreational fishing industry will be increased visitation rates and demand for accommodation in the region.

Alternative access models could be explored to help support fishing in the region, which is already a very popular pursuit. In New Zealand, fishing access is legislated so that the public have a right of access to banks *almost every lake, river and stream in the country*. Fish and Game NZ provide signposted “Angler’s Access” points and have online guides about freshwater fishing on private property, including the need to request access of landowners (<http://www.fly-fishing-guides-new-zealand.co.nz/fishing-guides-access.htm>).

KEY STEPS:

- 1 Engage with community groups working on waterway health and to ascertain attractive routes for guided tours
- 2 Build business case for guided fishing tours and river care programs including work with Parks Victoria and landcare groups
- 3 Engage with public and private land owners as needed



HUNTING IN THE REGION

Hunting is a popular sport in the Upper Murray region. With careful management and engagement with key stakeholders (including Hancock Plantations, Parks Victoria, Game Council, Victoria Police and local farmers), a guided hunting and hunting tours industry could emerge. This could include deer hunting, bows, dogs and photography as a focus while being managed with strong controls.

Strong legislation and controls for management of hunting exist in Victoria and New South Wales and this legislation should be documented and understood as a means to carefully manage an emerging industry of hunting for recreation in the region. A system of licencing checking and review as well as landowner permission would be required to ensure the sport is safely managed.

The economic impact of existing demand for hunting in the region as a tourist activity is not well understood. Further investigation should be undertaken to explore the potential, working within a strong legislative framework, for this industry to grow

in the Upper Murray. More information is required to understand the economic impact and associated activities associated with hunting that could bolster its contribution to the Upper Murray tourism portfolio.

KEY STEPS:

- 1 Engage with community groups working in relevant industries as well as private landowners to ascertain attractive routes for guided tours and appropriate locations for guided and controlled hunting
- 2 Build business case for guided hunting tours and landcare programs
- 3 Engage with public and private land owners as needed



FARM STAY / AGRI-TOURISM

Some of the Upper Murray region's greatest assets are located on private property. Picturesque views and sweeping landscapes are often not available to visitors, and there is a shortage of diverse accommodation options across the region. Towards 2030 there is an opportunity to engage with farmers and innovative businesses to create farmstay programs for B&B style accommodation, or "Wwoofing" opportunities on organic farms to encourage young tourists to visit the region (<http://www.wwoof.com.au/>).

Educational tours, farmhand opportunities and internships could be part of a farm stay program. The possibility for internships has been explored in some detail in the Agriculture Prospectus Concept Plan. At present, there is no centralised program for farmstays in the region (other than national or international websites such as AirBNB which operate differently and much more informally).

The opportunity to create farm stays may also feed into a program that could better enable farmgate sales and raise awareness about farmers' markets

and the agriculture industry in general across the Upper Murray region. Farm stays could also provide alternative revenue streams for farmers in the region.

KEY STEPS:

- 1 Engage with community groups interested in agri-tourism to conduct research into similar programs elsewhere
- 2 Build business case for accommodation in farming areas and consult with Council to understand any policy or regulatory requirements triggered by accommodation in agricultural areas
- 3 Engage with service providers or agri-tourism programs such as WWOOF
- 4 Engage with public and private land owners as needed

INFORMATION FOR TOURISTS

Access to information online and via Council's websites is a key way for people to engage with the Upper Murray Region prior to their visit. Coordinated tourist information such as that available through the Towong and Tumbarumba Shire websites (included on pages 6-7) should also be available at neighbourhood centres and key visitor sites throughout the region.

As development and implementation of the Upper Murray Brand progresses (refer to the Branding Prospectus Concept Plan for more information), there is an opportunity to roll out tourism brochures, maps and other supporting information for tourists to find everything 'in one place' for their trip to and around the region.

In order to deliver consistent messaging and branding across all tourist media, a project management fee could be built into projects relevant to tourism in the Upper Murray. This fee would enable a project officer to promote, uphold and improve the tourist experience in the region. Tourism promotion techniques could include

information relating to key routes and access points for destinations across the region, and highlight key features such as Pine Mountain, local flora and fauna, and promote local galleries, craft and coffee shops (as appropriate).

KEY STEPS:

- 1 Engage with community groups working on tourism activities to understand the calendar of ongoing events and tourism assets throughout the region
- 2 Build business case for tourism promotion officers or an in-built project management fee to include tourism promotion in key projects
- 3 Seek funding from State or Federal government to support tourism promotion in this key region

