Adapting to Climate Change in the SA Murray Darling Basin

Opportunities for Tourism

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Tourism snapshot

- There are 25 state tourism regions in the Murray Darling Basin.
- There are 54 million visitor nights and $9.1 billion generated in tourism revenue vs $15 billion agricultural production.
- Tourism revenue is 5% of the total revenue generated by the Basin.
- International visitors make up 5% – 20% of tourists in the Basin (excluding the ACT).
- Food and Wine is the most popular experience followed by Nature Based, then Culture and Heritage.
- There are 10,037 tourism businesses in the Murray Darling Basin.
The high profile of the Murray River makes it an ideal tourism destination.

- The Murray River has been featured in documentaries and several well known television series – *All the Rivers Run*, *Two Men in a Tinny* and *Gondola on the Murray*.
- 4 Tourism regions overlapping on SAMDB, 200 tourism businesses
- 2 million visitor nights
- Tourism in the SA MDB Region generates $250 million per annum, 4% total revenue
SA Murray Darling Basin

- **Food and Wine is the No. 1 Tourism Experience**
  - (29 to 36% of visitors)

- **Nature Based is the No 2 Tourism Experience**
  - (18% to 20% of visitors)
Drought Impacts on Murray River tourism

- Visitor Nights down 2.2% p.a. compared to 1.3% decline in comparable regions
- 20% of surveyed respondents changed their behaviour – visit less often, stay shorter, spend less, won’t come again
- 12% who have never visited will not visit in the next 5 years (22% of these said drought was the reason)
Drought impacts on River Murray tourism

- Houseboat occupancy down from 62% in 2005 (HHA)
- Down to 35% occupancy in 2009/10 (some operators)
- Reasons include perception of a dry river.
Drought and Climate Change

- 68% reduction in average annual flow (lowest 10% of dry years) – recent drought
- 23% reduction in end of system flow (best estimate of climate change)
- 58% increase in end of system flow (3,000 GL scenario – Draft Basin Plan 2010)
Adapting to climate change

- **Disaster Management**
  - Vulnerability – negative publicity – Drought and Flood, heat waves, power loss, mosquito virus
  - Adaptation – Accurate sources of information, Web cams, educating media – no “F word”, Media liaison, restoring confidence in river

- **Clean and Green and Sustainable**
  - Vulnerability – rising energy costs, water costs
  - Adaptation – Water and energy saving measures, promoting green accreditation

- **Community/Industry themes**
  - Vulnerability – acceptance of high food miles, low uptake local and native produce.
  - Adaptation – be regionally authentic, feature local food and wine products
Tourism adaptation

- Tourism Product Diversification
  - Vulnerability – sensitivity to extreme heat
  - Adaptation – creating more dawn and dusk experiences,
  - Vulnerability – warmer winters
  - Adaptation – promoting winter warmth