

**INQUIRY INTO MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC LAND IN
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Organisation: Riverina Regional Tourism

Name: Ms Linda Tillman

Date received: 19/08/2012

Following our attendance at a hearing of your Committee at Deniliquin on the 2nd August, 2012 we are pleased to present the following submission.

The matters addressed in this response principally relate to the River Red Gum State Forest in the Southern Riverina as referred to in the Terms of Reference.

Areas of Representation

As the name implies our Regional Tourism Board represents operators and local government areas within the Riverina.

As stated at the hearing Riverina Regional Tourism covers an extensive area comprising eighteen (18) Local Government areas as set out below:

Bland Shire Council
Carrathool Shire Council
Conargo Shire Council
Coolamon Shire Council
Cootamundra Shire Council
Deniliquin Shire Council
Griffith City Council
Gundagai Shire Council
Hay Shire Council
Jerilderie Shire Council
Junee Shire Council
Leeton Shire Council
Lockhart Shire Council
Murrumbidgee Shire Council
Narrandera Shire Council
Temora Shire Council
Urana Shire Council
Wagga Wagga City Council

Regional Marketing Themes

Riverina Regional Tourism undertakes its marketing based around four themes:

- (i) Visiting Friends and Relatives which represents the largest segment being 40.9% .
- (ii) Natural Attractions/Caravan and Camping
- (iii) Food and Wine
- (iv) Events

Our main marketing targets for our campaigns are regional NSW and VIC and Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra.

Issues related to terms of Reference

As earlier stated the matters raised in this submission relate to River Red Gum Forest in the Southern Riverina.

The Riverina Region is promoted as a great destination to experience natural beauty and the opportunity “come back to earth”. Based on recent research undertaken in the Murray, drivers to national parks include unwinding, recharging and connecting with family. Typical developments could include bush camping bird watching, interpretation, cycling and bushwalking offering nature based experiences with low environmental impact. Commercial operators can be encouraged to develop these opportunities.

The State Forests and National Parks are therefore important to developing the industry. For this reason our Board has developed a closer working relationship the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service. The Board has allocated a Director position to represent the service.

We have had several meetings to discuss the National Parks and Wildlife Service Draft Tourism Action Plan. It is recognised that there is scope for product development however there needs to be sufficient resources committed by the New South Wales Government to enable this potential to be fully realised.

In this context there is a need for improvement of signage, access roads and basic amenities depending on the significance and level of attraction of each Red Gum Reserve. On site information advising the visitor of various aspects of the parks is essential. If we are to promote these natural attractions then we need these basic facilities but also need to ensure the natural space remains pristine with minimal development.

There is also a need for long term commitment for maintenance of the parks and their amenities. There is also a need to strengthen relationships with local communities.

Marketing is another issue which needs resourcing so that potential visitors know of the parks attractions and how to get there. A communication structure needs to be established to inform visitors of when sections of the park are closed including communication through digital means.

Attachments

The following documents are attached to support this submission:

Murrumbidgee Riverina Map - example of a nature based marketing initiative

National Visitor Survey YE March 2012

Riverina Regional Tourism Board Strategic Plan 2009