

ATTACHMENT 13

Other;

Extracts from Deniliquin Tourism Strategy 2011-2014

Speech by Senator JOHN MADIGAN on 12/02/15



Deniliquin Tourism Strategy 2011 – 2014

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- Canoe and kayak hire,
- Bike hire,
- Indigenous interpretation and tours,
- Attractions related to Deniliquin's identity as the 'ute capital of the world',
- Bird watching and nature-based tourism trails,
- Tours of the rice mill,
- Organised tours of the cultural and historical attractions in Deniliquin,
- Tourism services do not meet the requirements of tourists,
- Ageing tourism infrastructure and facilities,
- Lack of interpretational signage at key attractions.

The gaps identified in the gap analysis are considered in greater detail in the Development Plan in section 11 of this report. The Development Plan provides a list of actions and recommendations required to address the identified gaps.

7.3 Success factors for regional tourism

Tourism Victoria (2009) identified several factors that are pivotal to the success of regional tourism. Information collected on the tourism survey was used to rate the performance of the Deniliquin against each of the success factors. The results are shown in figure 7-33. It shows that Deniliquin is not performing well in a number of key factors. These factors are addressed in the Tourism Strategy proposed in Section 10.

SUCCESS FACTOR	Excellent	Good	Average	Limited	None
Strong private sector driven regional tourism organisations,				✓	
Strong local tourism associations focused on their core role of visitor servicing;			✓		
Support from local government for visitor servicing, destination and infrastructure development and co-operative marketing;			✓		
Strategic planning for integrated and consistent marketing and holistic tourism development that is owned and implemented by all stakeholders;					✓
Co-operative marketing which maximises the effectiveness of industry, local government and state government contributions;				✓	
Leadership by strong and visionary organisations and individuals;				✓	
Quality visitor services that create satisfied visitors and lead to word of mouth promotion;			✓		

The tourism vision for Deniliquin contained in *Deniliquin Tourism Plan 1999 – 2002* required updating and was revised in consultation with the Steering Committee on 4 November 2010.

The new tourism vision is:

“Known for its tranquil bush setting, relaxed atmosphere and water-based recreational activities on the Edward River Deniliquin will continue to be a popular stop-over for motorists and a destination for family holidays. Deniliquin will also be the premier day destination for tourists in Echuca-Moama and a leader in hosting events in the region.”

Notes on the implementation of the Tourism Strategy:

- Stage 1 and stage 6 commence immediately. Both these stages should be implemented with high intensity from the outset.
- A focus should remain on stage 1 for the full 3 year period, and stage 6 should be close to completion by 2013.
- Stages 2 and 3 should only be commenced once stage 1 has been initiated.
- Stage 2 should be implemented with high intensity from the outset, but stage 3 should be introduced at a more moderate rate.
- Stage 4 should commence ahead of the summer holiday period in 2012 and should be introduced moderately. It may also commence earlier depending on the outcomes from the implementation of stages 2 and 3.
- The majority of stage 5 will be undertaken in 2013 following the successful implementation of stages 1, 2, 3 and 4.

10.2 Stage 1 – capacity building

Stage 1 builds an environment that will enable the other stages to be implemented successfully. Prior to undertaking demand building strategies an environment that encourages, supports and facilitates tourism development and growth must be created. This includes implementing processes, altering mindsets and facilitating change that will help Deniliquin to develop a more vibrant tourism industry. This stage is fundamental to the success of the Tourism Strategy.

Leadership must come from private enterprise and their desire to grow the tourism industry. However, the tourism survey identified that low business confidence, lack of investment and a lack of participation in the tourism industry has restricted private enterprise from developing tourism opportunities in Deniliquin. Respondents to the tourism survey identified that many tourism operators in Deniliquin have chosen the tourism industry as a lifestyle choice and may not have the capacity, expertise or ambition to work towards growing Deniliquin's tourism industry.

The tourism survey uncovered that many tourism operators are hesitant about making investment in their businesses and want to see results before they commit additional resources to the industry. This attitude and culture is not conducive to the innovation required to enhance Deniliquin's tourism industry and make the town a more attractive place for tourists to visit.

Until a restructure of the industry is undertaken growth of the tourism industry is constrained. With declining visitation across regional NSW and regional Victoria it is likely that the tourism industry in Deniliquin will suffer the same fate unless a restructure of the industry is made i.e. if nothing is changed a decline in visitation is likely (refer to figure 8-34).

Either the culture of existing operators and industry needs to be changed, or new businesses and entrepreneurs need to be attracted to the town. Private enterprise, the Council and the community need to work together in unison towards a shared vision for tourism in Deniliquin. Without commitment from these groups to work towards developing tourism in Deniliquin and the adoption of modern tourism practices by the tourism industry the Tourism Strategy will not be effective.

Figure 10-36 Scenarios for increasing tourism revenue in Deniliquin – increased spend per person compared to increased visitation.

REVENUE TARGET	REQUIRED INCREASE IN AVERAGE EXPENDITURE OF OVERNIGHT TOURISTS	REQUIRED INCREASE IN VISITATION BY OVERNIGHT TOURISTS
\$1 million	\$10	3,900
\$2 million	\$21	7,800
\$3 million	\$31	11,500
\$4 million	\$42	15,300
\$5 million	\$52	19,500

Key objectives:

- Improve the services available for tourists,
- Better communicate Deniliquin's product offerings and experiences to current visitors,
- Expand and develop new tourism products and experiences,
- Ensure that tourists are satisfied with their experiences in Deniliquin.

10.4 Stage 3 – increase visitation from touring motorists

The touring market has shown resilience and continues to be an important market in the Murray Region. Visitation statistics for the neighbouring Riverina region reflect that a resilient touring market has enabled a recent period of visitation growth against the national decline in regional tourism (Riverina Tourism Organisation, 2010).

It is estimated that a high proportion of the touring market are 'grey nomads'. The term grey nomad is applied to the section of the ageing Australian population who use their retirement years as a time to experience travel and holidaying activities once freed from the constraints of work and family commitments.

The success of the Long Paddock Touring Route was noted in the tourism survey with a number of respondents agreeing that the Touring Route had been a significant success. Organic growth in the touring market is expected to continue in Deniliquin (pers.com.Haley 2010). Therefore, planning for and catering for this market by providing the necessary infrastructure and facilities is essential.

There is an estimated 350,000 RVs in Australia and www.greynomads.com.au predict that in the next 12 months 18,000 caravans and motor homes will be sold in Australia. They believe that 80 per cent of these will be bought by the over 55s – i.e. the grey nomads.

This market has been identified as an opportunity for Deniliquin and stage 3 introduces measures required to capitalise on this market segment. However, grey nomads are also considered price-sensitive and have a lower expenditure rate per person that compared to the total tourist market. The Courier Mail reported that on average only \$386 is spent per vehicle each week by this market segment.

Deniliquin is already a certified *RV Friendly Town* and has good facilities to cater for this market segment. However, improvements can be made to better promoting Deniliquin as a stop-over

3. Develop communication strategies to reach tourists in Echuca-Moama.	3.1 Develop an annual promotional strategy to target tourists in Echuca-Moama. Recommendation: in addition to promotional activities establish a 'shop front' at the visitor information centre in Echuca. Recommendation: investigate the option of installing signage on the Cobb Highway from Moama to communicate the proximity and features of Deniliquin.	Deniliquin Tourism Unit.	Late 2011 - 2014	High
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STAGE 5: Increase overnight visitation

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Priority
1. Actively participate with regional marketing initiatives to promote the Murray Region.	<p>1.1 Re-define tourism boundaries.</p> <p>Recommendation: align with the Riverina Tourism Organisation and Murray Regional Tourism Board to work cohesively across borders with a regional focus.</p> <p>Recommendation: seek positions on relevant committees and boards.</p> <p>Recommendation: grow other regional partnerships.</p> <p>1.2 Develop a unified voice for the Murray Region.</p> <p>Recommendation: develop a unified voice for the Murray Region that could better represent the tourism industry in State and Federal issues e.g. provide advocacy concerning the recent decision to recognise the Barmah-Mullewa forest as a National Park.</p>	<p>Deniliquin Tourism Unit, Council.</p> <p>Deniliquin Tourism Unit.</p>	<p>2011 – 2014</p> <p>2011</p>	High



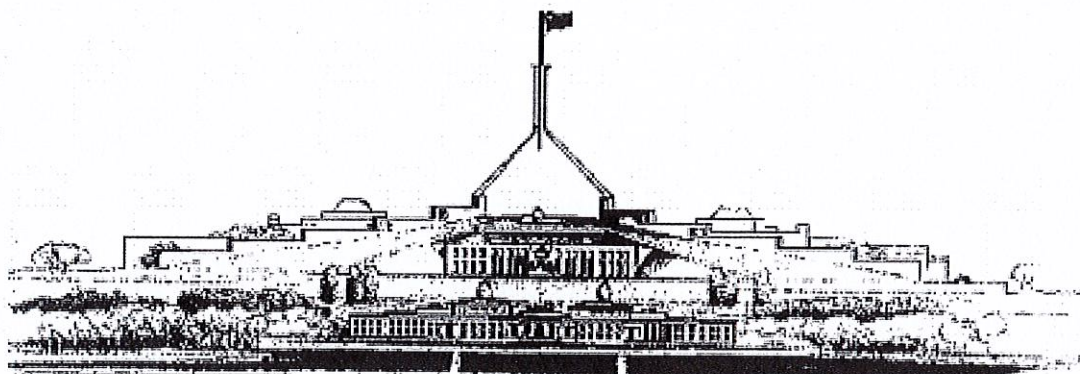
2. Develop products, experiences and services that reinforce the identity of Deniliquin within a regional context.	2.1 Encourage the development of new products, experiences and services to cater for overnight tourists. Recommendation: adopt a similar approach as undertaken in stage 2 item 3, but with a focus on developing products, experiences and services that reinforce the brand position of Deniliquin in a regional context.	Deniliquin Tourism Unit, Council.	2012 – 2014	High
3. Develop a broad promotional strategy for Deniliquin.	3.1 Better understand Deniliquin's role in a regional context Recommendation: share tourism insights and market intelligence with regional partners to build a better understanding of tourists in the region. Recommendation: conduct a competitor analysis to identify the unique attributes and product strengths of Deniliquin in comparison to neighbouring destinations. 3.2 Develop an annual promotional strategy for Deniliquin. (<i>Note: this promotional strategy will supersede the promotional strategies developed in Stage 3 and 4</i>). Recommendation: the promotional strategy should include a plan of all advertising and promotional spend. It should also include detail of how publicity will be achieved for key initiatives. Recommendation: Considering greater finances will be committed to this promotional campaign than those undertaken in stages 3 and 4 control measures should also be implemented to evaluate the effectiveness of the promotions. For example key promotional and advertising activities should be evaluated to determine their effectiveness. This information should be used to further refine and improve Deniliquin's promotional strategy.	Deniliquin Tourism Unit. Deniliquin Tourism Unit.	2012 – 2014 2012 - 2014	High Medium





COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE
PROOF
ADJOURNMENT
Murray-Darling Basin
SPEECH

Thursday, 12 February 2015

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

Date Thursday, 12 February 2015
Page 113
Questioner
Speaker Madigan, Sen John

Source Senate
Proof Yes
Responder
Question No.

Senator MADIGAN (Victoria) (20:09): I rise to speak tonight about a matter of national importance. It impacts our ability to feed ourselves. It goes to the heart of our rural and regional communities, not to mention our capital cities. It does not discriminate. It affects all Australians in one way or another. But you will not see much reporting on this in the major national media and you will not hear this matter discussed around kitchen tables in our metropolitan cities. Currently, this issue is under the radar in this place and the other. Done and dusted, most people would say. Nothing to see here. In the words of the new Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, the government is committed to delivering the Murray-Darling Basin Plan in full by 2019.

Last week, I travelled more than 3,000 kilometres and over a third of that by car. I stopped at Albury-Wodonga, Deniliquin, Barham, Koondrook, Robinvale, Mildura and Yea, which is north of Melbourne. I attended four meetings, two of them open to the public. These were well-attended and passionate get-togethers. Locals who run businesses, farmers who grow food and residents stopped what they were doing to attend. They wanted their say; they wanted to be heard. I attended meetings with irrigators and food growers, citrus and table grape growers and nut and rice producers. I toured farms and a rice production facility. I spoke directly with several hundred people throughout the week. I return here tonight with some clear and unambiguous messages about our water resources. I return with messages about the impact of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan on our fellow Australians. I return with a singular mission. I will speak of all these things later.

The basin covers 14 per cent of Australia's landmass. More than two million people live in Murray-Darling Basin across the states of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. The basin contains an estimated 72 per cent of Australia's total area of irrigated crops and pastures. It is one of the most important food and fibre regions in this country. According to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, the region contains 40 per cent of Australia's farms. The value of its irrigated output is nearly \$7 billion. Cotton, fruit, grapes, vegetables, rice and pasture for meat and dairy production are the main types of irrigated agriculture activities in the basin.

In 2012-13, this accounted for over 50 per cent of Australia's irrigated produce. From this area comes nearly 100 per cent of Australia's rice, 96 per cent of Australia's cotton, 75 per cent of Australia's grapes, 59 per cent of Australia's hay, 54 per cent of Australia's fruit, 52 per cent of Australia's production from sheep and livestock and 45 per cent of Australia's dairy. One message is clear: the basin is vitally important to Australia. What happens there matters to each and every one of us.

I return to this place after my all-too-fleeting visit. My first message is this: the rage that burned across the region five years ago when the MDBA released its first draft water buyback policy has not died down. It continues. People are exhausted in the basin. They feel betrayed. Many of them are up and leaving, defeated by a bureaucracy they see as politically hijacked; a bureaucracy that is not independent, despite its claims; a bureaucracy that is committed to reconfiguring Australia's food bowl in order to plan for a one-in-a-100-year drought scenario; a bureaucracy that has insufficient experience in the complexity of water systems, which some would say had previously been effectively managed by the states; a bureaucracy that is failing in its stated aims to help the environment and failing to monitor or assess its own performance in this area; a bureaucracy that is failing in its science and failing as a government body in its duty of care and commitment to social and economic outcomes; and a bureaucracy that is failing in its duty to accurately communicate concerns, submissions and input from Australians to their government.

Not only is it failing in this area but it is deliberately obfuscating messages to suit its own ends. I am talking about the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. This organisation employs more than 300 staff with an annual revenue from government coffers of \$47.8 million. People in the basin are tired, they are depressed, and some of them are leaving. But, above all, they are angry at what is being done in the name of the environment by this unaccountable administration.

I visited a magnificent family farm at Deniliquin, and after 13 years of hard work putting aside land for the environment, not forced by government but of their own volition, the owners have sold and are leaving. At another property, in the one family since the 1870s, similar questions are being asked—how sustainable is it; is there a future, how long can we last? People on properties like these have survived floods, they have survived fluctuating commodity prices and they have survived an always changing agricultural environment. They have survived the changing climate; they have survived family and other traumas. But they are questioning whether they can survive the so-called Murray-Darling Basin Plan. They are fed up with talking to politicians who give them blah, blah, blah in return. They are fed up inputting to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority at so-called community consultation sessions. They say it is like talking to a bloody vacuum.

Southern Riverina Irrigators represents 1,600 food growers. They showed me their own notes from a meeting with the MDBA last September. Then they showed me what had appeared on the MDBA's own website on the same meeting. The two accounts were vastly different. The MDBA's version was a list of discussion topics including the importance of clear communication, the importance of using local knowledge, water trading prices, issues around management of the Lower Lakes and environmental watering. SRI, on the other hand, had articulated 25 concerns—complaints and suggestions that never made it any further than the meeting room, it seems. These included: can we do better with the environmental water we already have as opposed to further decimating our communities; we deserve proper engagement that recognises and acts on our concerns and issues—not tokenism; people are right on the brink; and cultural water—if we are to consider Indigenous stakeholders then we must also consider the other communities that have grown up with that water. The list goes on.

Right across the Murray Darling Basin, a considerable number of Australians feel betrayed by successive governments of all persuasions. They feel tricked by an unaccountable bureaucracy hell-bent, they say, on an unmeasurable environmental imperative. In fact, the people on the ground, the people I speak to, tell me the so-called basin plan is having the opposite effect. It is harming our environment. People expressed concern about the foundation science used by MDBA in developing the plan. They say any claimed environmental benefits are not properly measured or assessed. They say the plan's environmental, social and economic benefits are skewed. People come last. They question the so-called independence of the MDBA and the link between the plan with the long-term plan for the Coorong, Lower Lakes and the Murray mouth. Many say the Lower Lakes were always estuarine and it does not make sense to maintain them at historically high levels. They say using freshwater as a key mechanism to scour out the Murray channel to the Southern Ocean is a travesty. It is misguided, they say. It is poor science. It is a bloody waste of a hell of a lot of water that could be productively used elsewhere.

Let us for a moment talk about money. The Murray Darling Basin Plan is widely reported to be a \$12 billion project—that is twelve thousand million dollars. Ten billion dollars was allocated under the Water for the Future Program announced by former Prime Minister John Howard. Another \$1.77 billion was announced by Julia Gillard, another former Prime Minister, in the Lower Lakes just before she departed public life. This was on top of previous expenditure such as \$700 million for the Living Murray program; \$57.7 million for the Perricoota-Koondrook Living Murray forest program, which I understand subsequently blew out to approximately \$100 million; and \$80 million on river redgum and woodland conversions—conversion of state forests, including Millewa forest and other forest areas, to National Park.

Just how much has been spent in recent years on the environment in the basin? I don't know, but it is obviously billions. It is interesting, indeed fascinating, what you hear when you hit the road and talk to real people. Last week a water trader told me his company had made the deal of the century. He said he had sold floodwater to the previous government for \$34 million. That is right, floodwater—water the government would never actually recoup. He said it was the best deal he had ever made. It was reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, and I read from that report:

In late 2008 the Rudd and Rees governments announced they were buying \$34 million worth of water licences from Tandou to secure more water for the environment.

However, it emerged that Tandou had hung onto its higher-yielding licences and sold the two governments "supplementary" licences, which only allow water harvesting after intermittent flood events.

The report continues:

This week Tandou's chief executive, Guy Kingwill, confirmed to the *Herald* that the company had not got a drop of water from its supplementary licences since 2002-03.

That is right. The government of the time bought \$34 million worth of water on which it would probably never collect. Welcome to the brave new world of water management in Australia: big bucks and smoke screens and the Australian taxpayer forking out enormous sums of money for ill-defined, or zero, returns. One farmer told me there were 25-odd different types of water or water licences, but I have been unable to confirm this figure since my return. Whatever the truth, the whole Murray-Darling Basin Plan water situation is highly complex and certainly open to obfuscation and exploitation. People in the Murray-Darling Basin are incredulous at the wanton spending of money for no apparent social, economic or environmental benefit. They say the claimed environmental benefits are unmeasured, they say the social and economic costs are enormous and far-reaching and they say our farming sector is being destroyed. They tell me the so-called plan is not addressing a triple bottom line.

Wakool Shire is located in south-western Riverina between the two mighty rivers of the Murray and the Murrumbidgee. The local council was so concerned by the devastation caused by the so-called plan last year that it commissioned an economic impact statement. The statement paints a very clear picture. There is a direct link between water and the viability of any basin community. Farmers are leaving Wakool. Between 2001 and 2011 the population declined by 814 people or 17 per cent. This reflects a combination of changes in the farming sector, the impacts of drought on farm operations, a contraction of the timber industry and, more recently, some impacts of the first phase of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. The statement also says that the implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan could see the Wakool local government area lose 38 per cent of its water. This would see shire agricultural production decline by \$25.8 million and job losses, direct and indirect, totalling 223. There would be a loss of regional wages of \$11.2 million and reduced consumer spending in the Wakool local government area of \$8.8 million. As a small irrigation economy, the shire has called for active consultation with its industry on any water reduction targets as well as a program to provide support to assist farm improvements and economic diversification. A summary of the Wakool report says that the impacts of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan could actually be greater. If water sales are from scattered properties—the Swiss cheese effect—the costs will be higher for the remaining fewer irrigators left to fund infrastructure maintenance. This is a complex issue. I have been visiting the Murray-Darling Basin since I was a kid, and every day I learn something new, and that learning curve increases when I travel to the area and talk to real people.

In the remaining time I have, I make these few final points: (1) the structure of the MDBA is flawed—I am told the organisation is political and not independent; (2) the real impact of the removal of water from productive use is underrated and understated by the MDBA; (3) the so-called plan only applies to regions in the basin above Lock 1 in South Australia while the supposed significant environmental benefit of the plan is below Lock 1—the Coorong, Lower Lakes and the Murray—and even that benefit is widely questioned; (4) in 2002, the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council commissioned the Living Murray project. The Scientific Reference Panel said that a 1,500 gigalitre cap combined with structural, operational and water quality management could deliver a healthy working river. We must adhere to this cap.

There is not enough time tonight to cover all of these issues. I have not even begun to mention the deliberate man-made flooding and the so-called constraints management strategy. We all know the devastation of a flood from nature, but we have people who deliberately want to flood people and flood land. Communities across the basin have told me the plan must be paused for at least five years. Communities across the basin have called for a Senate inquiry into the plan. They tell me the economic and social costs will far exceed the \$12 billion-plus price spent already. This week the Prime Minister, Mr Abbott, said, 'Good government starts today,' and I sincerely hope he means it. He said, 'I have listened, I have learned, I have acted.' Prime Minister, I implore you to listen to the people of the Murray-Darling Basin. Let the facts speak for themselves, then act.

The PRESIDENT: I remind honourable senators that legislation committees will meet to consider estimates, commencing on Monday, 23 February 2015 at 9 am. Program details will be published on the Senate website.

Senate adjourned at 20:28