



**ECHUCA
MOAMA**

Echuca Moama
The Murray's living legend

*A year in
review*

2019-20



ECHUCA MOAMA

A year in review

2019-20

STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

Echuca Moama Tourism & District Tourism Association (EMDTA) will play a key role in building an inclusive, capable and high performing tourism industry.

OBJECTIVE:

To grow visitation and yield for Echuca Moama and District through an integrated marketing strategy through strong branding, tactical campaigns to niche markets.

The Integrated marketing strategy is a detailed tactical plan incorporating traditional marketing (print and advertising) and non-traditional marketing (social and digital channels) to apply a consistent brand message.

Visitation data: source Tourism Research Australia, March 2020.

Key Marketing Pillars:

Primary pillars:

1. River Cruising (including houseboats and water sports)
2. Nature based activities (bush walking, cycling, fishing)
3. History & Heritage
4. Food Wine & Produce
5. Arts & Culture
6. Festivals & Events

Geographic Focus:

Targeting consumers that have the highest propensity to stay overnight in Echuca Moama (and region) – aligned with the Murray Region Destination Marketing Plan.

Target markets:

- Link to high yield segments – Adult Couples/DINKs and DIWKs on solo visits, Families; VFR/Repeat visitors with Children and Grey Nomads;
- Metro Melbourne, Regional Victoria (Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong, Gippsland, Southern NSW)
- Sydney Melbourne Touring – an international drive route between Sydney and Melbourne that has been adapted for the domestic market. Currently funded by Visit Victoria, Visit Canberra and tourism associations, and individual operators.

Niche Markets:

- The Family Market
- Retirees
- VFR/Repeat visitors
- DINKS/DIWKs
- Wedding Market
- Car Enthusiasts
- International Markets - NZ

Partnerships:

- Actively communicate and strengthen collaborative working relationships with key partners Campaspe Shire and Murray River Council and continue to develop overall event marketing strategies that strengthen destination appeal;
- To gain support and leverage the marketing plan for the destination with tourism members including Echuca Moama Accommodation Association, Attractions, Retail, Service and Hospitality segments;
- EMDTA continues to strengthen collaborative working relationships with Murray Regional Tourism Board to gain support and leverage off broader marketing campaigns from Visit Victoria, Destination NSW and Tourism Australia;
- To continue to work closely with MRTB in the delivery of major projects which grow our destination appeal and service delivery e.g. Visitor Transformation and Murray River Road; Murray Adventure Trail;
- To leverage from our major partners for PR, Media and other marketing opportunities;
- To grow support from key Business Groups including C4EM, Business and Trade Associations;

As destination managers, EMDTA works cohesively with the industry to engage and embrace visitors and locals with the unique stories to showcase our region's assets.

Funding Partnerships

- EMDTA acknowledges the financial contributions from both Shires for the delivery of Marketing and Visitor Services.
- The Campaspe Shire contributes \$240,244 for the delivery of Visitor Services & \$91,048 for Marketing Services in 2020-21. The Campaspe Shire Council also approved a rollover of \$22,315 marketing funds from 2019-20 to 2020-21 due to



EMDTA's inability to market over the lockdown periods due to the pandemic.

- Murray River Council contributes \$79,552 to EMDTA for Visitor Services and Marketing for 2020-21.
- EMDTA acknowledges the support of Echuca Moama Accommodation Association of \$48,000 over two years for marketing campaigns.

Building A Resilient Industry

Echuca Moama Tourism's role has never been as important as it has over the 2019-20 year. As a membership-based organisation supporting our industry through the most challenging tourism climate in our lifetime. Echuca Moama Tourism has continued to provide leadership, strong advocacy and operator support throughout this period. This year has been defined by two halves. The first, extremely positive with record visitation, expenditure and yield and the second of tragic consequences of the global coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) combined with the impacts of the most active bushfire season Australia has ever witnessed.

In this most challenging environment with the impacts of COVID-19, the two successive Victorian lockdown periods, the closure of the NSW Victorian border closure and the closure of the Murray River, EMDTA has delivered:

Advocacy - The Voice of the Industry

1. Regional Tourism Review response to Government - August 2019
2. The Future of Visitor Servicing - CEO member of the State Committee
3. Murray Visitor Transformation Program involvement
4. Voice of the industry to Government in support of industry issues in relation to Border closures, River closures & industry specific issues
5. Worked closely with EMAA to support and resolve specific industry & operator issues.

6. Crisis Response - developed a Marketing Transformation strategy in consultation with Campaspe Shire, Murray River Council, EMAA, Moama Bowling Club and Rich River Golf Club, to address key issues facing the industry & market the destination.
7. Pro-active with media to deliver key messages on behalf of the industry. Local media (Riverine Herald); Regional Media - WIN TV; ABC Bendigo; ABC Goulburn Murray; State Media - Channel 9; ABC; 7 News; ABC State Wide Drive.
8. Supported industry with ongoing training opportunities.

Visitation 2019 - 20

(period April 2019 - March 2020)

- 797,000 domestic overnight visitors - up 4.2 % on YE March 2019
- Visitors spent over 2.4 million nights in the region - up by 15.2% on YE March 2019
- Growth was in the holiday market with 55.2% nominating holiday as the largest reason for their visit c/f 53% in 2018-19
- Visiting Friends & Relatives visitors tallied 33.1% - growing 3.8% c/f YE March 2019
- Business declined by 7.3% compared with YE 2019
- Holiday (60.2%) was the largest purpose in terms of nights in the region, followed by VFR (28.6%) and Business (9.3%). Compared to YE March 2019 holiday grew by 7.9% while business nights declined by 4.5%

Where did our visitors come from?

- 77.7% of visitors & 71.6% of nights were Victorian based. Compared with YE March 2019, Victorian visitors stayed longer with nights up by 5.1%

- NSW contribute 12.5% of visitors & 9.3% of nights in the region. Compared with YE March 2019 NSW visitors were up by 10.6%
- South Australia contributed 3.0% of visitors & 9.6% of nights in the region.
- Length of Stay - Visitors stayed on average 3 nights in the region up by 0.3% on YE March 2019.
- Age - 65 years and over (21.9%)
- 45 - 54 years (19.2%)
- 15 -24 years (18.7%)

What do they like doing while in the region?

- Eat out, dine at a restaurant or café (48.7%) was the most popular activity undertaken by visitors to the region.
- Visiting Friends & Relatives - (34.6%)
- Pubs Clubs Discos - (30.3%)
- Sight Seeing - 24.6%
- Bushwalking - 12.5%

Accommodation:

- Friends & Relatives Property was the most popular accommodation type - 37.1%
- Caravan Park / Commercial Camping Ground second most popular type - 21.9%
- Caravan & Camping - non-commercial - 16.7%

Domestic Daytrip

- 770,000 domestic daytrip visitors - down by 15.8% on YE March 2019

ECONOMIC YIELD: TOTAL SPEND - \$482 MILLION

Domestic Overnight visitors to the region spent \$388 million in the region while Domestic Day Trip visitors spent \$94 million in the region totalling \$482 million or 1.3 million dollars per day into our economy.



BRINGING VISITORS TO OUR REGION

Destination Marketing:

Echuca Moama Tourism created seasonal marketing campaigns inspiring visitors to the region and encouraging visitors to return. Marketing Campaigns were carried out for Winter, Spring and Summer. Marketing Campaigns included a mix of traditional, such as print, radio and television, PR, digital (website) and social media (Facebook and Instagram)

Building Brand - Print Publications

National

- Qantas Link Magazine
- Jetstar Magazine

Victorian/NSW

- Official Visitor Guide – continued to be distributed throughout Melbourne Metro Hotels, Melbourne Visitor Centre, Melbourne Airport, Visitor Centres across Victoria & Regional NSW
- WHERE magazine – distributed through Melbourne hotels
- This Week in Melbourne
- Cultural Guide/ Print & Digital (60,000 copies)

Regional

- Out & About – Bendigo & Ballarat
- Winter Blues Festival Guide (July)
- Riverboats Music Festival Guide (February)
- Riverine Herald – VFR series – local stories
- Shopping & Dining Guide - Echuca Moama
- Artisanal Food & Drink Trails

Publicity

- Echuca Moama & Surrounding region featured regularly on WIN News;
- Echuca Moama featured in Glenn Marshall's blog via Campermate; Glenn's story Murray River Destinations for Summer Touring also featured in Caravan World;
- Echuca Moama features throughout Destination NSW Spring Campaign;
- Destination NSW engaged "We are the Explorers" to explore the Murray Region and PS Emmylou was featured in a blog by Connor Moore;
- Peter Quilty, a judge at Top Aussie Vans competition, published an article online, Muster on the Murray;
- Echuca Moama SUP featured in Visit Melbourne's Your Dogs Happy Space Campaign – video was viewed over 47,000 times;
- Echuca Moama featured in Blog via Passport Collective featuring kayaking;
- PS Emmylou featured in German Travel Magazine – full page feature on the Murray;
- Australian Traveller 25-28 November, 2019 - Visits to St Anne's Winery, Pacdon Park, Overnight stay on houseboat and a massage experience;
- Hunter & Bligh – 26-28 November, 2019 - Visits to Rich River Golf Club – Golf specific famil, organised by DNSW
- Nomadasaurus - Visits to Kingfisher Cruises, Iwaterski, Junction and Talo as well as Bird Hide Mathoura – DNSW famil;
- DNSW – Murray Best Shared Campaign - Murray River Paddlesteamers, Junction Moama and Rich Glen Olive were filmed and photographed by Destination NSW and images from their businesses were shared throughout the campaign;
- Herald Sun Escape - Kendall Hill - Break for the border - November, 2020

Seasonal Campaigns

Television Campaigns:

EMDTA conducted three seasonal campaigns:

- Winter, Spring & Summer Campaigns
- The Campaigns featured Andrew Walker as Brand Ambassador
- The Campaigns featured TV into Bendigo /Ballarat regional windows which covers the broad areas of Swan Hill, Sea Lake, Castlemaine, Maryborough, Charlton, Warracknabeal
- These Campaigns were augmented with Print, Digital and Social Media.

Sydney Melbourne Touring – Inland Drive (International)

- Sydney Melbourne Touring will re-position the Journey between Sydney and Melbourne as one of the great Australian road trips for both domestic and international when international tourism returns. SMT's overarching strategic objective is to increase overnight visitors and expenditure along the drive. A new brand and strategy have been developed over 2019-20.
- EMDTA Australian Tourism Exchange - Perth 2019
- Murray River Paddlesteamers – featured in Trail Finders UK wholesale program
- Echuca Moama featured in German wholesaler anniversary program
- Sydney Melbourne Touring – rebranded and repositioned for Domestic Drive audience 2019-20





Bringing Visitors Back

With the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions for regional Victorians in late August 2020 EMDTA launched a multi-faceted campaign which was highly targeted into the Ballarat region with a soft launch into the Geelong market.

Key Elements Of The Campaign

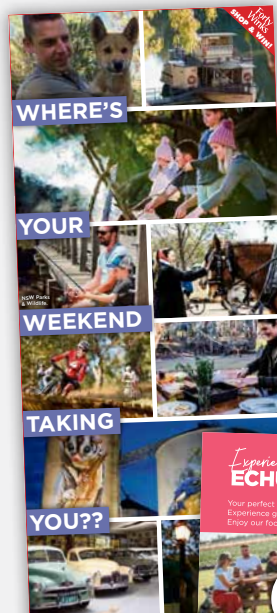
- Bus Supersides
- Billboard – central Ballarat
- Shop Panels – Wendouree Shopping Village
- POWER FM Radio
- SPOTIFY
- Ballarat Courier (digital and print) including a competition for two nights plus attractions
- NewsXtend Digital
- Reachlocal Digital
- Geelong Times including a competition for two nights accommodation plus attractions
- Targeted social media
- Out and About magazine – Ballarat and Bendigo editions – two page ad and editorial
- 17 Echuca Moama operators joined the three nights for two campaign with voucher holders booking their accommodation valid until 31 August 2021
- Despite operating in a very unpredictable COVID-19 environment, with a closed border and 5/6 of Victoria still locked down under stay at home restrictions, the campaign performed extremely well and delivered some exciting results for the region, which have been felt immediately but will also benefit the region into the future.



Riverboats Music Festival guide press ad



Bendigo & Heathcote Official Visitor Guide press ad



Experience Your Own Back Yard Campaign



Where Magazine press ad



Avalon Airport Magazine press ad



Jetstar Magazine press ad



Out & About press ad



Time to Play Postcard Series



Awaken Campaign: September - October 2020

Results:

1,401 users to the Awaken Website Landing page (over 7 week campaign)

982 of which were unique users

Total number of participating operators: 17

Total number of vouchers claimed: 73

Conversion rate*: 7.4%

*(conversion rate of between 2% and 5% is considered good for these types of subscription-based offers)

Location of users:

Geelong Up 66.67% on previous year

Ballarat Up 21.05% on previous year

Melbourne Down 23.97% on previous year (Still in lockdown for campaign period)

Geelong Times Social Media competition:

- 785 new followers on the Echuca Moama Facebook page
- 70,000 competition reach
- 8,000 engagement (11.4% conversion - reach/engagement)
- 1600 post shares

Social media posts and paid ads:

Instagram:

Total published posts and stories during the campaign period: 70

Engagements 6,426 (+ 9.3%)

Profile Actions 47 (+194%)

Net Follower Growth +369



Awaken Campaign collateral





echucamoama.com

Over the past 12 months echucamoama.com has received 184,125 website hits up 14.25% on the previous financial year which was 161,153.

Unique Users (number of individuals accessing site, some may visit multiple times) were also up 15.5% on the previous financial year with a total of 137,313 users.

Most popular pages: Home page on www.echucamoama.com accounting for 8.38% of traffic in 2019/2020.

Things to Do page and the Accommodation page followed as the next most popular pages, at 7.66% and 4.32% respectively. Other significant pages included 'What's on this Month', What's on Events (download), and the page for the event Regional Picnic in January 2019

Demographics:

- Female users – 60%
- Male – 40%
- Age Group: highest percentage of users was in the 25 to 34 year age group at 22.5%, followed by the 55 to 64 year age group

Location of users:

- Melbourne (69.3%)
- Sydney (11.55%)
- Adelaide (2.01%)
- Echuca (1.82%)
- Brisbane (1.67%)
- Perth, Geelong, Canberra, Bendigo, Ballarat and Shepparton – Mooroopna.

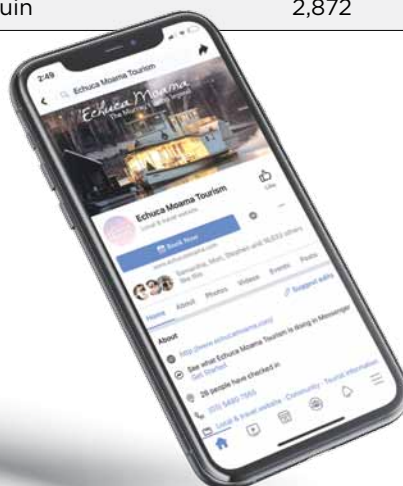
SOCIAL MEDIA

Achievements

2018- 2019	July 2019 - Oct 31, 2020
f Facebook Likes: 13,746 (up 14.9%) Impressions: 2,878,170 (144% up) Engagements: 109,056 (up 21%) Video Views: 105,900 (509%) Post link clicks: 7,004	f Facebook likes: 3,403 Impressions: 3,157,803 (8.3%) Engagements: 163,391 (17.9%) Video Views: 201,200 Post link clicks: 13,784 (203%)
Instagram Followers 4,826 (up 26%) Impressions: 754,675 (up 113%) Engagements: 17,663 (up 77.4%) Story Impressions: 224,794 (up 487%)	Instagram Followers 6,297 (up 37%) [up 1,091 from June 14th] Impressions: 1,349,184 (up 88.4%) Engagements: 27,839 (up 17.6 %) Story Impressions: 1,349,184 (up 88.4%)

Leading the Murray:

	Instagram	Facebook
Echuca Moama	6,297	16,612
Visit Albury Wodonga	4, 812	5,288
Visit Sun Country	1,309	3,608
Visit Mildura	4,783	14,348
Visit Swan Hill	2,796	4,671
Visit Deniliquin	2,872	14,348





FOCUSING ON OUR VISITORS

Visitor Centre performance in 2019/20 has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic, affecting the four months from March – June 2020.

The Visitor Centre was closed to the public from Monday 23rd March to Thursday 4th June and again from Monday 8th June to Friday 12th June. Despite the impact of bushfires over the summer period and the impact of the pandemic lockdowns, the Visitor Centre has delivered quality visitor services over the period. The comparison below compares for the same time period. (July – Feb)

Visitor Centre Performance over past year (comparison with previous 2018/19)

	2018/19	2019/20 (for same period to 28 Feb)
Accomm Bookings	313,757.55	282,869.50 Down 9%
Visitation	36,437	37,916 Up 4%
Attractions Sales	75,342.91	77,744.25 Up 3.2%
Merchandise Sales	22,693.21	33,400.08 Up 47.2%
Event Ticket Sales	124,552.00	125,139.00 Up 0.5%

Event Ticketing

In 2019/20 the Visitor Centre has sold \$125,139 worth of event tickets supporting local operators and community organisations.

Events Ticketed in 2019/20 include:

- Riverboats Music Festival 2020
- Chamber Philharmonia Cologne
- ITP International Women's Day Brunch
- Fishing on the Fairways at Rich River Golf Club
- Australian Darts Open Spectator Tickets
- Vic Women's Country Bowls Carnival
- Murray Business Network Events
- Diversity of Leather Event
- Grand Final Luncheon at Rich River Golf Club
- Inside Story 2019
- Campaspe Murray Business Awards Gala Dinner
- The Molato Project
- Dirty Dicks Theatre Restaurant
- Pacdon Park Artisan Foodie Workshops
- Birds of Prey Fun Day at Kyabram Fauna Park

Volunteer Ambassadors

In 2019/20 we welcomed four new ambassadors to our team: Phyllis Brennan, Tenaya Cox, Deborah Carrington and Marg Smith

In 2019/20 our team of 21 ambassadors provided 2876 hours (the equivalent of 359.50 days) of assistance to visitors and events.

Roaming Ambassadors featured around town during the Riverboats Music Festival and the Australian Darts Open.

Student Placements

In 2019/20 Echuca Moama Visitor Centre welcomed two students – we had indigenous tourism trainee Laura Hudson working with us from January 2020 to July 2020, and School Based Trainee Ella Barry who will be with us from January 2020 to December 2021. In conjunction with their placements students are undertaking the TAFE Certificate 3 in Tourism studies.





Rochester Ancillary Visitor Centre – first ancillary centre to be established in Victoria.

During 2019/20 we worked with volunteers from Rochester Sport Museum to gain accreditation under the Echuca Moama VIS hub for an ancillary visitor centre located in the Rochester Sports Museum. The approval for this accreditation came through in February 2020 and the process to integrate the Rochester volunteers into our volunteer team commenced just prior to COVID-19, and will continue once the centre reopens post COVID-19. The ancillary visitor centre at Rochester is the first visitor centre accredited under the ancillary model in Victoria.

Familiarisation Program

During 2019/20 (prior to March 2020) visits have been conducted to:

Alton Gallery, Foundry Art Space, Historical walk with Gwen Potter, Whistle Stop Gallery; Mathoura VIC, Reed Bed Bird Hide, Edward River Camp Ground; Great Aussie Beer Shed, Rushworth, Waranga and Whroo; Where the Long Paddock Meets the Murray, Billabong Ranch, Kingfisher Cruises.

Familiarisation Innovation

Due to COVID-19, familiarisations had to be suspended as of March 2020 which meant that we needed to come up with innovative ways to ensure our ambassadors remained engaged and knowledgeable about the region which has led to our Virtual Famil program which we intend to keep operating in conjunction with face to face famils once these are permitted.

Post March 2020, familiarisations went online and virtual famils have been conducted during the shut down period with operators including: Maiden's Inn Holiday Park, Cactus Country, Historical Society, Rich River Golf Club, Pacdon Park

Staff Training

Staff and several ambassadors undertook MRTB i2i Training Program – Information to Inspiration as part of the Visitor Transformation Project.

All staff undertook training on the ATDW platform and how to assist operators to use the system

Ambassador Training

In 2019/20 four new ambassadors completed induction training.

An extensive ambassador enrichment program has been developed during lockdown which will be rolled out in 2020/21.

Industry Development

ATDW Listings - In response to COVID-19, Murray Regional Tourism was able to negotiate on behalf of Victorian operators to receive free ATDW listings (NSW already receive free listings). As a result, VIC staff assisted 65 Victorian Businesses to claim and set up their free ATDW listing, as well as providing operator training on the ATDW platform.

Virtual Reality Pilot

Echuca Moama Visitor Centre participated in a pilot program funded by Murray Regional Tourism Board to install a Virtual Reality station within the Visitor Centre. The objectives of the project are to increase visitor's knowledge of the region and encourage them to spend more and stay longer. Two headsets were installed in the Visitor Centre in 2019/20.



GROWING PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS THE TOURISM AND LOCAL COMMUNITY

Consumer Shows

- Wedding Expos - Swan Hill and Echuca
- Motor Classica - Melbourne Exhibition Building

Member Networking and Professional Development

Industry Network Nights:

- 18 June - Echuca Distillery
- 22 October - Echuca Workers
- 10 December - Moama Bowling Club

Professional Development Opportunities:

Echuca Moama Tourism partnered with Netstripes to deliver industry training over the past six months. A series of webinars have been rolled out for the industry to access. These opportunities have been regularly communicated through our industry update newsletters.

In August, The Australian Innovation Centre agreed to provide two free interactive webinars to the operators across both Echuca and Moama and region. This was taken up by 15 businesses. For those who undertook the webinars a free two-hour one to one mentoring session was available. A number of operators are in the process of accessing this mentoring opportunity.



Building Community Partnerships

- Worked with Kyabram Town Hall Committee to deliver and market Fashion exhibition
- Worked with Rochester Lions Club to develop and establish an accredited Visitor Centre for Rochester
- Grew industry membership with Heathcote Wineries (within Campaspe Shire) - Heathcote 11; Tellurian; Shiraz Republic; Peregrine Ridge; Silver Spoon
- Repair Café - worked in conjunction with SLOW Echuca Moama to hold the initial Repair Café
- Worked with CLRS to assist with their new marketing strategy
- Worked in conjunction with the Riverine Herald to deliver the Shopping & Dining Guide
- Worked with the Riverine Herald to develop and tell a series of local stories, Postcard series and Experience your own Backyard series

Tourism Industry Awards

NSW Tourism Awards

- Cadell on the Murray Motel Resort - Silver

Regional Tourism Awards

- Rich River Golf Club, Moama - Hall of Fame
- Cactus Country, Strathmerton - Gold
- Cadell on the Murray Motel Resort, Moama - Gold
- Rich Glen Olive, Yarrawonga - Silver

Victorian Tourism Awards

- Riverboats Music Festival Echuca - Gold and Hall of Fame
- Cactus Country Strathmerton - Bronze

Growing visitation in softer periods of the year and leveraging events for the Tourism sector.

Events supported by EMDTA - Marketing support and Visitor Services

- Winter Blues - 20th Anniversary - July 2019
- Darts Australia - July - Aug 2019
- CMCA Rally - Elmore October 2019
- World Bowls Challenge - Moama Bowling Club November 2019
- Fishing on the Fairways - Rich River Golf Club September 2019
- River Boats Music Festival - February 2020
- Southern 80 - February 2020
- Poetry Trail Launch - Historical Society - November 2019

Let's Go Kids - Summer edition



This Week In Melbourne - Summer edition





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