

BUILDING BETTER TOURISM BUSINESSES FOR OUR REGION

Consolidation, collaboration and clarity of purpose were just some of the ideas to come from the six-month Riverina Murray Regional Tourism Business Accelerator Program, delivered by RDA Riverina, RDA Murray and Voyager Strategies on behalf of Destination Riverina Murray.

Nine businesses from across the region took part in the Accelerator Program, representing a cross-section of tourism industry operators, from accommodation and eateries to museums and function centres.

RDA Riverina CEO and Director of Regional Development Rachel Whiting said the Program was made possible due to funding from the Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund and funding from Destination Riverina Murray.

"The Accelerator is a unique program that provides the right balance of structured online learning, mentoring with business specialists, and collaboration with other operators.

"The participants built skills in areas such as financial management and strategic planning and pitched their ideas for growth to an expert panel on Wednesday 15 May.

"Part of RDA Riverina's Workforce Development Plan, the Accelerator Program aims to strengthen existing businesses to help them grow."

Destination Riverina Murray Chairperson Genevieve Fleming said her organisation was delighted to fund the Accelerator Program with assistance from the Federal Government.

"Our charter is to drive visitation to the Riverina Murray region and to do that we need high performing business operators providing fantastic tourism experiences, quality food and wine offerings and appealing accommodation options.

"The impact of applying disciplined business analysis and strategic planning support to the participants in the program was considerable. It was also gratifying to see the cross pollination of ideas and the relationships that developed between operators as a result of the program.

"The capacity and quality of the tourism sector in our region has been substantially improved as a result of this initiative. More funding is required to extend the program further afield for the benefit of more operators in the Riverina Murray region."

Wayne Bond from the Leeton Heritage Motor Inn said the Program was an opportunity to stop and step back from his business to focus on goals and assess where-to next.

"We've built the business to a certain level and this has given us options, to move forward and focus on new areas so we can grow from there.



“We’re now working on five key strategies to grow our business, including creating a Leeton Safari Collaboration with Altina Wildlife Park and Pages on Pine Restaurant, which has a lot of potential to grow tourism to the town and the region.”

Alex Smit from River Deck Café in Albury said the Program forced him to think about what he wants from his business.

“At the end of the day, you need to look at what you are getting out of your business. We’re all so busy that we don’t take much time in actually addressing some of these questions, and that was very valuable.

“I’ve learned that there’s more opportunities in my business than I knew beforehand. From here, I want to grow the business, free up some more personal time and deliver a better product for the region.”

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MEDIA NOTE: For more information or to arrange interviews, contact RDA Riverina CEO and Director of Regional Development Rachel Whiting on 0429 444 213.

The Riverina Murray Regional Tourism Business Accelerator Program was made possible due to funding from the Australian Government’s Building Better Regions Fund and funding from Destination Riverina Murray. Griffith, Wagga Wagga and Albury City Council contributed to initial breakfast events held in each location in 2018.



An Australian Government Initiative