

Murray River Tri-State National Landscape Steering Committee

MINUTES - 18.3.09

*Murray River Queen, Waikerie, South Australia
Meeting Open at 5.35pm*

PRESENT: Mark Eckel, Kristy Vriends, Tony Sharley, Shane Strudwick, Ray Jones, Graham Clarke, Carolyn Caddy, Paul Cohrs, Hank van Apeldoorn, Jock Robertson, Renae Harman, George Lovegrove.

OBSERVORS: Bob Goodfellow (Jolly Goodfellows Bird Watching), Lis Robertson (Chowilla Station), Karen Arnold (Wentworth Visitor Information Centre), Chris Koolmatrie, Ken Smith and Richard Mintern.

APOLOGIES: Margret O'Dwyer, Duncan McKenzie, Julie Jewel, Angela Presley, Dale Atonysen, Kris Harrington, Merridie Martin, Grant Whiteman, Steve Millington

WELCOME: Shane Strudwick welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Region Boundary: Ray Jones is still trying to communicate with Swan Hill and bring them up to speed as part of the Murray River Tri-State Region.

Branding and Product Audit: It was suggested by Parks Australia and Tourism Australia to steer away from deciding on a temporary name for the area until the Brand Audit is undertaken. The committee will continue to use Murray River Tri-State Region.

Website: Shane has held off updating the website due to the response letter which was received from the Reference Committee about the Murray River Tri-State Application.

Communication: Shane explained that there has been no feedback from Tourism Australia about the results from the movie 'Australia'. Carolyn Caddy explained that Graham Clarke was featured in advertising and that there had been a boost in international visitors after the movie was released.

Motion: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6.11.08 be accepted as a true and correct record.

Moved: Ray Jones

Seconded: Jock Robertson

Carried

NEW BUSINESS:

Executive Officer Position

Sam Fielke has resigned from her position as Executive Officer. Ken Smith explained that the Riverland Development Corporation is very supportive of the National Landscape Project and as a result have offered the services of Kristy Vriends to help take over some of Sam's responsibilities. Ken also explained that the announcement of the new Riverland Tourism Association Manager is pending and that person will replace Emily White on the Steering Committee.

As there were a number of new committee members Shane suggested that we all introduce ourselves and give a brief description of our roles.

Correspondence and Communications

Letter from the Tourism Australia Reference Committee

Shane referred to the letter from the Tourism Australia Reference Committee which is seeking additional information from the Committee regarding our candidacy submission.

- **Alignment with Brand Australia**
There was no concern from anyone on this topic as everyone agreed that we are well aligned with the Brand Australian experience.
- **Sustainability**
Tony Sharley suggested that many of our parks, wetlands and eco-tourism operators would already have well documented plans about how they are environmentally sustainable. Someone needs to obtain all of these plans and link them together to make an overall sustainability plan for the Tri-State Region.
- **Leadership, Planning & Marketing**
There is a concern that the State Tourism Organisations have not yet fully grasped the National Landscape Program. It was addressed that there needs to be a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the three states and key stakeholders. It would be greatly beneficial for the application if each state provided more support for the Murray River Tri-State Region submission. The National Landscapes program has been recognised in the Victorian Tourism Plan and it is felt that the Program could fit into the other states strategies which are outlined in their plans. In order to have a stronger standing when trying to get the states involved Tony Sharley suggested that the committee should have a Business Plan which clearly demonstrates everyone's commitment and direction to the Murray River Tri-State region's application for National Landscape status. The first step of this Business Plan is to clearly define the Steering Committee's objectives. Ken Smith suggested that every committee member submit their five main objectives to Shane and Kristy so that they can be collated and produce a list (of no more than ten) of the main objectives of the Steering Committee. These objectives will be formalised at the next Committee Meeting along with a preliminary Business Plan. It was agreed that an MOU between all stakeholders will still be needed; however the Business Plan will be the first step of the process. Committee members spoke of already standing MOU's and agreements between states, and suggested that these could be used as a basis for the Committee's.
- **Indigenous Elements**
There is a lot of potential in the region for Indigenous support and tourism. Opportunities for funding and Indigenous employment in tourism were also spoken about.

Australian Alps Communications

Communication from the Australian Alps was supplied with the agenda.

Tourism Australia News

Shane feels that the communication and correspondence received from Tourism Australia is not sufficient particularly after the National Conference in October and asked for the support of the Committee to allow him to write to them asking for more support and communication in regard to information sharing. The Committee agreed and support Shane in writing this letter to Tourism Australia.

Chairman's visit to the Murraylands and Flinders Ranges

Shane visited the Murraylands and Flinders Ranges to present to them what National Landscapes is and what the Murray River Tri-State Region is trying to accomplish. It is important that our neighbouring regions understand the importance of the project and how it will benefit their regions if the Murray River is recognised as a National Landscape. Broken Hill still needs to be approached in the hope that they will also support us as a neighbouring region.

Communication with Swan Hill

This issue was discussed when discussing the minutes from the last meeting.

Media

There has not been a lot of media brought to the Murray Region's attention regarding National Landscapes, however Graham Clarke informed the Committee that he is now the face of Indigenous Tourism Australia and features in the latest Qantas magazine. Richard Mintern updated the group on the re-branding of World Heritage program across Australia.

Strategy

Tourism Australia letter and feedback

Addressed in Correspondence.

Tri-State in principal agreement and MOU

There is no need for a MOU until the Committee has decided upon its main objectives.

Balanced states and stakeholders committee

There is a lack of NSW and VIC representatives on the Steering Committee, it is hoped that once the Committee has outlined its objectives through the Business Plan for National Landscapes that key stakeholders can be asked to join the committee.

Committee roles and responsibilities

This issue will be addressed once the Business Plan of the region has been defined.

What next?

All members of the Steering Committee will submit their five main objectives to Shane and Kristy, who will then collate them and produce the main objectives that the Steering Committee wish to achieve. A preliminary Business Plan draft is to be created.

Brand Audit

There was nothing to discuss as it has been decided to leave the branding until the region has reached that stage of the process.

Product Audit

There was nothing to discuss as it has been decided to leave the product audit until the region has reached that stage of the process.

Funding

Opportunities

There was no need to speak about funding opportunities as the Committee first needs to be successful in the application process.

Executive Officer Position

This topic had already been covered previously by Ken Smith under New Business.

Other

Paul Cohrs spoke about an opportunity to obtain funds from the Ross Foundation to help facilitate the Business Plan. It was decided that the Committee first needs to work on defining their objectives before seeking funding.

Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

Next Meeting

The next Committee meeting will take place as part of another familiarisation, possibly in NSW. Carolyn Caddy, Graham Clarke, Hank van Apeldoorn and Ray Jones to discuss and generate some possible dates for Shane. Dates TBA.

Meeting Closed at 7.38pm