



# *Our highlights*

**2021 - 2022**

*Echuca Moama*  
The Murray's living legend



## AGM 2021 -2022

### Letter from the Chair

2021 – 2022 has been yet another challenging year. It does not seem that long ago that we had bushfires and since then we've battled through a global health pandemic, and most recently, riverine flooding. I am sure some people are wondering like me if it will ever stop!

Needless to say, the tourism industry has been pushed to the limit, and as always, our community stood up and helped each other in times of need. It was so good to see just how many people helped with the sandbagging around Echuca Moama and its Districts during the recent high-water events. Young, young-at-heart, tough, vulnerable, and resilient. As an industry and vibrant community, it has been heartening to see the great courage shown by the community, our operators, our partners, all stakeholders, and the industry. My hope is that once all areas of both Shires can fully reopen, the entire region will bounce back from over three years of disaster and uncertainty to reclaim the position of the preeminent visitor destination offering experiences for short breaks and as a year-round, all-season holiday destination.

Over the last year, Echuca Moama Tourism has undertaken an organisational review through Linda Tilman, of Tilma Group. The purpose of the review was to create a future plan for a sustainable visitor economy, and the structure and partnerships to ensure plan delivery. All focused on the visitor, the visitor experience, and how we as an Association drive activity to achieve higher visitor yields, increased stays, and increased visitor spending. Our thanks to Campaspe Shire Council and Murray River Council for their generosity of time and valuable input throughout the process, and to industry partners, operators, businesses, and other associations and groups for customer insights, commercial expertise, and strategic thinking. The plan is in its final stage of development, before moving to the next step of economic modelling, defining the strategy for success, and the tactics to deliver the best outcomes for you the industry and as a trusted partner of members, and local government.

A key driver of the review was Kathryn Mackenzie, who as Chief Executive Officer led the review. On behalf of the Board, I thank Kathryn for her dedication, expertise, tireless enthusiasm, countless hours, and sheer hard work to elevate Echuca Moama Tourism, not just over the last year, but for many years previously. I have had the great pleasure of working alongside Kathryn and seeing first-hand her passion for this industry, and this region. Under Kathryn, I thank our highly valued and hardworking Visitor Information Services team of Karen Colvin, Jenn Rendle, Di Kelly, and Fran Martin, our loyal volunteer Ambassadors, our contractors Sue Milgate, Jordan Grant, and Anna Hayward, and the network of people providing services to the Association for the benefit of members.

At the last Annual General Meeting, the Board welcomed three new Board Directors. Dean Oberin of Oberin Hospitality Group, Kristy Hayes of the Riverine Herald, and Paul Levars of Rich River Golf Club Resort. They joined Board Directors Jason Clymo of J2Creative and Aishe Besim of The Sweet Meadow as well as Murray River Council representative Chris Bilkey, Mayor and Moama Ward Councillor, and Campaspe Shire Council representative, Rob Amos, Echuca Ward Councillor and who was most recently elected as Mayor. My thanks also to Council Observers to the Board, Keith Oberin and Sam Campi from Campaspe Shire Council and Sarah Ryan and Rebecca Hayward from Murray Shire Council. Recent Board changes, after the end of the financial year, include the stepping down of Kristy Hayes as Board Director, whom we hope to work with in another capacity, and Sam Campi as Board Observer. Thank you to Kristy and Sam, and welcome to Astrid O'Farrell. My personal thanks to all Board directors for their expertise and capably navigating change, and for steering the Association through another challenging year.

I take this opportunity to thank both our Local Councils, Campaspe Shire Council and Murray River Council, for their continuing financial support and contribution to the Board. I would like to acknowledge that the Campaspe Shire forgoes commercial rental for the Visitor Information Centre and allows the Echuca Moama Tourism Board to direct income from the subleasing of offices to Murray Regional Tourism through Visitor Information Services. Echuca Moama Tourism is appreciative of this additional financial support. Murray River Council supplies Echuca Moama Tourism with a vehicle, which supports the work of the Association and provides high-profile branding at street level.

Echuca Moama Accommodation Association has been a long-time member of Echuca Moama Tourism contributing additional marketing resources and in-kind support. I acknowledge their work and tremendous support for this Association throughout this challenging time. They have supported the Visitor Information Services team and worked extremely well in assisting with industry input and offers included as part of destination marketing campaigns. More broadly, our thanks to event partners for Riverboats Music Festival, Southern 80, Winter Blues, Moama Lights, the Tongala Hay Bale Trail, and Pop & Pour; industry partners including the Port of Echuca, Murray Regional Tourism, Destination Riverina Murray, and VTIC; and other partners such as the Committee for Echuca Moama, amongst others.

My final recognition is of all the operators, businesses, attractions, venues, and services that members provide to make Echuca Moama and Districts a compelling destination for visitors. With over 300 members we are humble as we acknowledge your continued support and we celebrate the contribution that each and every one of you makes to this region, and to the visitor experience.

This year we have seen the power of the Murray and Campaspe Rivers. While visitors are drawn to experience our rivers, we have and are so much more. From The Long Paddock, History Trail, Silo Art Trail, and Backroads Trail; all the towns of our region; the heritage experience of our Paddlesteamers; the river experience of boating and houseboats; a holiday mindset from campsites, vans, and holiday parks; the short-stays and long-breaks enjoyed in hotels and motels; an emerging art and cultural icon of significance; major events; diversity of recreational activities; goods and farmers' markets; plus all the offerings from hospitality, clubs, retail, services, restaurants, bars, cafés, food, and beverages delivered from each and every one of our members that combine across our region to feed the hearts, minds, bodies, and souls of visitors to Echuca Moama and its Districts.

In closing, we could not do it without you, and we will do everything we can to drive the recovery of visitation in 2023.

**John Hall**  
Chair

## MARKETING CAMPAIGN RESULTS

Marketing during 2021 and 2022 has presented ongoing challenges for travel, tourism, hospitality, events, attractions, and the visitor economy. The region continued to be significantly impacted by COVID during the first half of the year, with lockdowns, border closures, social distancing rules and an ever-changing landscape regulating visitor travel. A relaxation of restrictions saw us return to a new normal in the second half of the year, and a welcome change for all members, partners, and businesses. However ongoing COVID outbreaks, rising interest rates, and petrol prices and an increase in the cost-of-living reduced disposable income and discretionary spending. All factors combined to impact the travel habits of visitors, creating challenges to successfully market Echuca Moama and Districts.

Despite these challenges, Echuca Moama Tourism's marketing campaigns contributed to driving solid visitation to the region to year ending 30 June 2022. Results include the highest domestic overnight visitation along the Murray at 663,000 overnight visitors, followed by Sun Country at 565,000, representing 28.7% of all domestic overnight visitors to the Murray region. The Echuca Moama and District region also achieved the highest domestic visitor nights along the Murray, with 2M nights, or 28.2% market share, and the highest domestic overnight visitor spend at \$322M. Each overnight visitor is spending on average \$160 per night, which is a \$7 per night increase on the average nightly spend pre-pandemic for YE June 2019 of \$153 and significantly higher than YE June 2017 of \$122, which was at the time a record-breaking year for visitation to Echuca Moama.

Combined with day trips, tourism contributed more than \$1.06M per day to the Echuca Moama economy for the year ending 30 June 2022. This was achieved despite border restrictions between Echuca and Moama, our largest source of accommodation, which was closed to Victorian holiday travelers for approximately four months during FY22.

Given the market uncertainty, Echuca Moama Tourism adopted a cautious yet strategic approach through advertising. Media advertising campaigns were cross-platform, multi-channel integrated campaigns designed around seasonal campaigns and delivered to precision targeted audiences to achieve results. Monitoring of visitation data and on-going surveys of operators identified the strongest geographical areas to for campaign targeting to maximise audience reach. Marketing messaging alignment ensured ongoing, consistent campaigns and messaging to showcase the region as a year-round destination.

Solid bookings for the summer period enabled reallocation of advertising budget into digital redevelopment. Website redesign during November and December 2021, resulted in the launch of the redeveloped site on 17 December 2021. The look and feel of the website were refreshed, and a customer-experience perspective allowed a focus on creating a conversion-driven 'hub' for bookings and information. Along with a general modernisation and upgrade of the site, some of the key changes included featuring bookable experiences more prominently on the home page, development of an interactive regional map to promote Echuca Moama and the smaller surrounding towns, and the addition of an itinerary builder.



*Port at Dawn - Tamara Cadd Photography*

## Marketing results

The following data represents our key marketing results for the year ending 30 June 2022. Due to the impact of the global health pandemic in the tourism sector, results have been compared to FY19.

Note: FY19 was an exceptional year for visitation to the region, following the record-breaking year of FY18.

### Website statistics:

Website users:	Up 76%	120,504 to 211,503
New users:	Up 76%	118,847 to 209,188
Pageviews:	Up 55%	472,087 to 731,743
Site revenue:	Up 159%	\$110,977 to \$287,543

### Geographic location of users:

Melbourne	Up 82%
Geelong	Up 72%
Ballarat	Up 145%
Bendigo	Up 96%
Shepparton	Up 5%

### Social media click throughs:

Facebook	Up 121%
Instagram	Up 290%
Google search	Up 76%

### Content and asset creation:

#### Video asset creation:

Top Tourism Town award video  
(15 second and 105 second cuts)

Entertain Winter in Echuca Moama video  
(15 and 30 second cuts)

All videos can be found on the Echuca Moama Tourism YouTube channel - @EchucaMoamaTourism

#### Video asset creation:

Summer/Autumn young couples shoot  
Entertain Winter campaign



Stand up Paddleboarding Echuca Moama



Top Tourism Town 2022 - 105 Sec



The River is Calling - 15Sec

# SPRING, AUTUMN, AND WINTER CAMPAIGNS

The Year in Review provides highlights for three seasonal campaigns during FY22:

## Winter/Spring campaign

Originally planned for Winter 2021, this campaign utilised \$87,000 raised by our industry and community to market Echuca Moama into metropolitan Melbourne post the lockdowns and disruption of 2020. Following the announcement of further border closures and lockdowns in mid-2021, the campaign was put on hold except for a metro train side in market from early July 2021. The remainder of the campaign was held until Winter 2022. A regional campaign launched into target geographic markets at the end of August, aligning with the easing of lockdown restrictions in regional Victoria.

In market:	5 July – 12 September 2021
Target markets:	Ballarat, Geelong, Shepparton, Bendigo, Metro Melbourne (train side only)

## Total website visitors up 33%:

Geelong	Up 63%
Ballarat	Up 101%
Bendigo	Up 55%
Shepparton	Up 116%
Melbourne	Up 31%

## Autumn digital campaign

Due to solid autumn bookings, a short burst digital campaign was activated to coincide with the Southern 80 Ski Race and to promote bookings in May. The campaign involved YouTube and Spotify advertising, as well as a paid socials ad promoting an itinerary focused on couples and a social media competition for a two-night stay in Echuca Moama.

In market:	26 April – 31 May 2022
Target markets:	Geelong, Ballarat, Mornington Peninsula

## Total website visitors up 77%:

Geelong	Up 165%
Ballarat	Up 260%
Melbourne	Up 99%
Bendigo	Up 69%
Shepparton	Down 8%

## Autumn 2022 Tactical Highlights:

- Social media competition
- Paid social campaign targeting couples and featuring the newly developed couple's itinerary
- 12,489 Spotify ads played in full
- 15,071 YouTube video views



Times News Group: Tear sheet

## Winter 2022 – Entertain Winter in Echuca Moama

With 2022 being the first year of ‘open’ travel since the beginning of the pandemic, there was uncertainty around travel patterns and what the winter season would bring in terms of visitation. Working with board members, operators, event organisers and Council representatives, the concept of *Entertain Winter in Echuca Moama* was workshopped, inviting visitors to see what the region has to offer during winter, and linking to an eight-week program of events and experiences that Echuca Moama Tourism would develop to drive visitation over the winter period.

The *Entertain Winter in Echuca Moama* program featured the *Winter Blues Festival*, *Moama Lights*, and the darts championships as drawcard events, while showcasing events and experiences from our members. The aim was to encourage multi-night stays by showcasing everything the region had on offer.

In market: 1 June – 21 August 2022

Target markets: Melbourne, Ballarat, Geelong, Bendigo, Shepparton

### Website visitors up 147%:

Melbourne	Up 109%
Geelong	Up 101%
Ballarat	Up 182%
Bendigo	Up 66%
Shepparton	Up 26%

## Entertain Winter in Echuca Moama

### Tactical Highlights:

- 4.58m digital campaign impressions
- Over 3.9m social media impressions and 146,000 engagements
- 1673 new social media followers gained
- 206,057 YouTube video views

- 62,555 Spotify ad plays
- Over 213,916 website pageviews

\*When compared to the same period in 2018/19

The poster features the title 'entertain winter IN ECHUCA MOAMA' in a stylized font with three stars above 'winter'. Below the title, the dates '25 JUNE - 21 AUGUST 2022' are displayed. A central collage of images shows various activities: a person working in a kitchen, a table with food and wine, a person playing darts, and a person on a bicycle. Text on the poster lists activities: 'MASTERCLASSES', 'FOOD & WINE EVENTS', 'WINTER LIGHTS TRAIL', 'GUIDED TOURS & SCENIC FLIGHTS', 'THEMED EXPERIENCES', and 'FAMILY ACTIVITIES'. A circular badge on the right side lists 'Winter Blues Festival 29-31 July' and 'Moama Lights 31 July-21 August'. At the bottom, it says 'View the program online and book your experiences early' and provides the website 'WWW.ECHUCAMOAMA.COM/ENTERTAIN'. A QR code and the 'Echuca Moama The Murray's living legend' logo are also present.

Echuca Moama What's On Ad

The poster features a blue electric guitar on the left. The title 'ECHUCA-MOAMA WINTER BLUES FESTIVAL' is prominently displayed. Below the title, it says 'is back!' and '28-31 July 2022 Port of Echuca precinct'. A small text box on the right says 'A free event, bringing the blues to you in the pubs, restaurants and cafes of the historic Port of Echuca. Wander between venues and experience food, wine and the beats of the blues.' Below this, it lists 'OVER 50 ACTS PERFORMING LIVE' and provides a list of artists including '19 TWENTY, AARON POLLOCK, ANDREW FARRELL (PIANO WIZARD), ANNA SCIONTI, BACKWOOD CREATURES, BAG O' NAILS, BENNY JAMES & THE BLUE FLAMES, BILL BARBER, BRODERICK SMITH, CHESSBOARD LOUNGE, COLLARD GREENS AND GRAY, GREG DAN DINNEN, ELECTRIC BLUES COLLECTIVE, ESCOLITA SOUL, POOLS, FRANK SALTANA, GREGG ADKISON & THE SOULDIGGERS, HEAVY MEDICINE, JARROD SHAW, JESSE REDWING, JULES BOULT & THE REDEEMERS, JULIAN JAMES & THE MOONSHINE STATE, KELLY AULTY & THE EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN, KINGS & ASSOCIATES, THE LACHY DOLEY GROUP, LLOYD SPIEGEL, MATT KATZIS, NARDIA, NICK CHARLES, PAUL BUCHANAN'S VOODOO PREACHERS, PETE CORNWELL'S BAND, PHIL RARA BAND, RAMBAL, SAMMY OWEN BLUES BAND, SHANE FACEY, TRIC, SPOONFUL, STOPPHOUSE, SWEET FELICIA & THE HONEYTONES, THE HOODOO MAN, THE MCNAMARR PROJECT, WHITE LIGHTNING, RATTLIN BONES, BLACKWOOD AND MORE...'. At the bottom, it provides the website 'winterblues.com.au' and 'Book accommodation at echucamoama.com'.

Winter Blues Half Page Ad & Editorials

## VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES

2021 and 2022 was again severely impacted by COVID restrictions and border regulations, which reduced the ability of people to travel to the region.

Results show that these impacts were primarily from the first half of the financial year, with performance increasing over the second half of the financial year. While all areas of measurement increased – this was coming off 2020/21, which was more severely impacted by COVID restrictions and border regulations across the entire year.

Despite the impact of the pandemic, the Visitor Information Centre delivered quality visitor services throughout the financial year period from 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022.

Visitation was up 37% on the previous year and sales of accommodation, attraction bookings and event tickets increased by 7.7%, 67% and 125% respectively. The Visitor Information Centre achieved total sales of \$657,062 in FY22, a 23% increase on FY21 sales.

	FY22	FY21	Variation
Accommodation	\$382,396	\$354,840	Up 8%
Visitation	\$38,355	\$27,919	Up 37%
Attraction Sales	\$126,042	\$75,299	Up 67%
Merchandise Sales	\$57,249	\$50,757	Up 13%
Event Ticket Sales	\$53,020	\$23,536	Up 125%

### Event Ticketing

The biggest event of the year was the second *Moama Lights* event, held across July and August 2022. Echuca Moama Tourism provided ticketing support for the event with \$10,620 ticket sales sold via the centre. Due to ongoing COVID restrictions, many of the major events for Echuca Moama were unable to proceed during 2021 and 2022.

### Familiarisation program

In 2021 and 2022, familiarisations were undertaken in person and online with our virtual famil program. In-person famils and presentations included: Cactus Country, Barmah Heritage Centre Nathalia, The Paddock at Ulupna, the Big Strawberry, Monichino Wines, Picola Silos; Kyabram town hall, Kyabram fauna park, Tongala murals, Great Aussie Beer Shed; Flash Fairlanes, Garnock Garage; Old Moama - Chanter Estate Military Museum, Old Telegraph Station, River Captains Cottage, Maidens Punt Site; Redgum Motor Inn Mathoura, Gulpa Creek Walk, Gulpa Creek Bird Hide, Edward River Campground, Timbercutters, Swifts Creek Camp Ground; Benarca Camp Ground, Five Mile Boat Ramp; Echuca Galleries and Museums; Lockington Hotel, Ciurleo's, Living Heritage Centre, Lockington Travellers Rest and the Loch Ness Yabby; Mt Camel wineries - Silver Spoon, Domaine Asmara, Tellurian Wines, Peregrine Ridge, and The Shiraz Republic. Out thanks to all members who participated in the familiarisation program.events for Echuca Moama were unable to proceed during 2021 and 2022.

### Staff training

Staff and volunteers took part in the Murray Regional Tourism "Inspiration to Information" Visitor Services Training program.

Two new ambassadors completed Visitor Information Centre induction training.



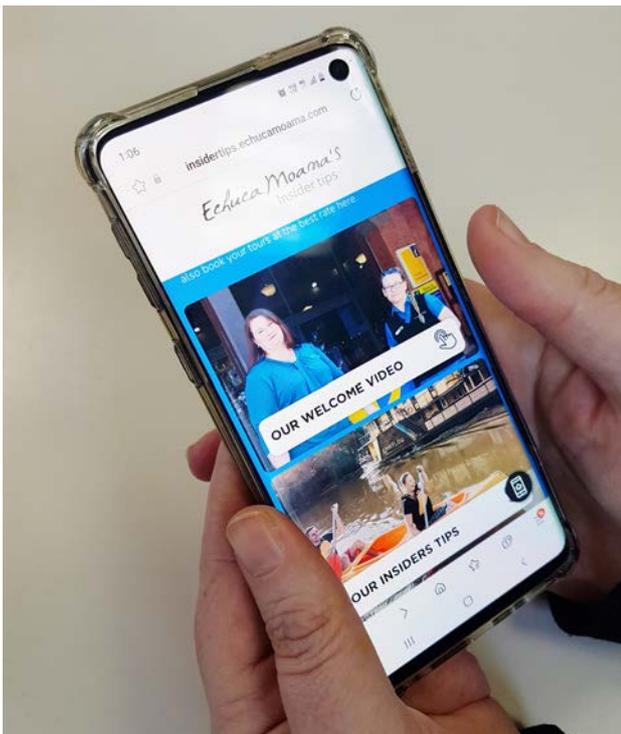
EMT Ambassadors

## Visitor Services Web App - Echuca Moama Insiders Tips

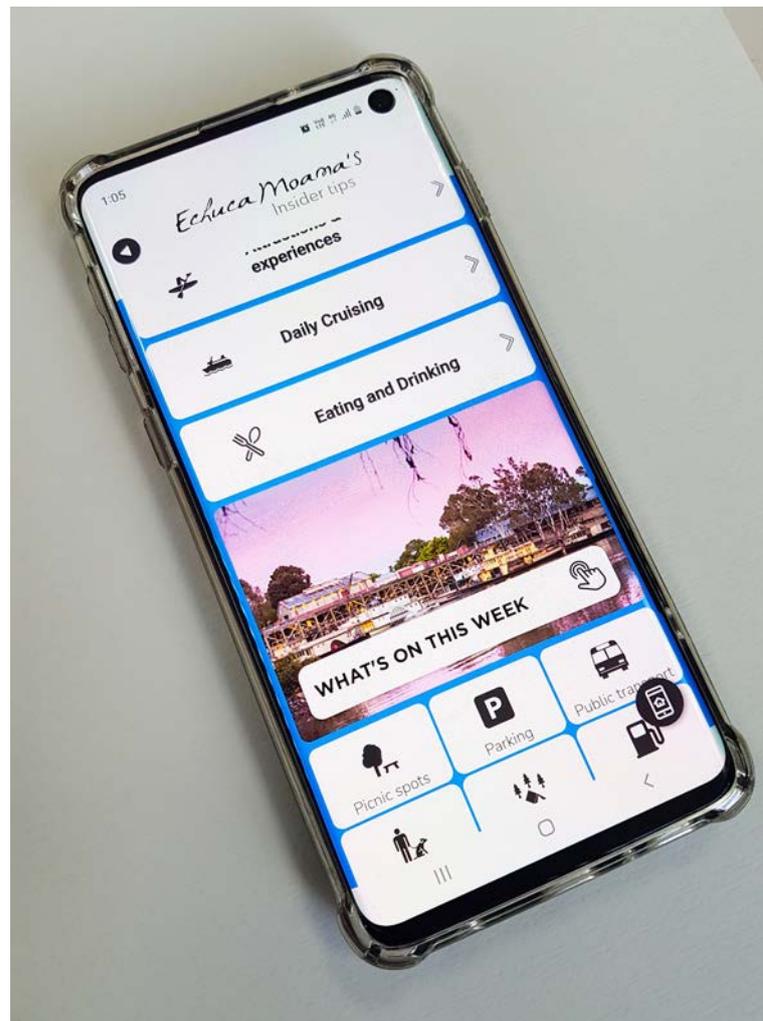
One of the major innovations' visitor information services staff worked on during lockdown periods was the creation of a visitor information services web app - *Echuca Moama Insiders Tips*. This is a web-based app for Visitor Servicing, taking the visitor experience to travelers who do not visit the Visitor Information Centre in person. *Echuca Moama Insiders Tips* uses the Guest Compass Program, and the app can be viewed at: <https://insiderstips.echucamoama.com>

### Local produce hub

Echuca Moama Visitor Information Centre staff worked hard during lockdown periods to expand our range of locally grown and produced stock to create a local produce hub. The hub increases awareness of local producers and provides an opportunity for them to showcase their products to visitors in the Visitor Information Centre. As a result, sales of local produce in 2021/22 increased 12.78% on the previous year. Local produce hampers have been a popular choice in the lead-up to Christmas 2021 and we will continue to expand on this for 2022. Due to the success of the local produce hub, sales channels will expand in 2023 with the launch of an online store.



Guest Compass Web App



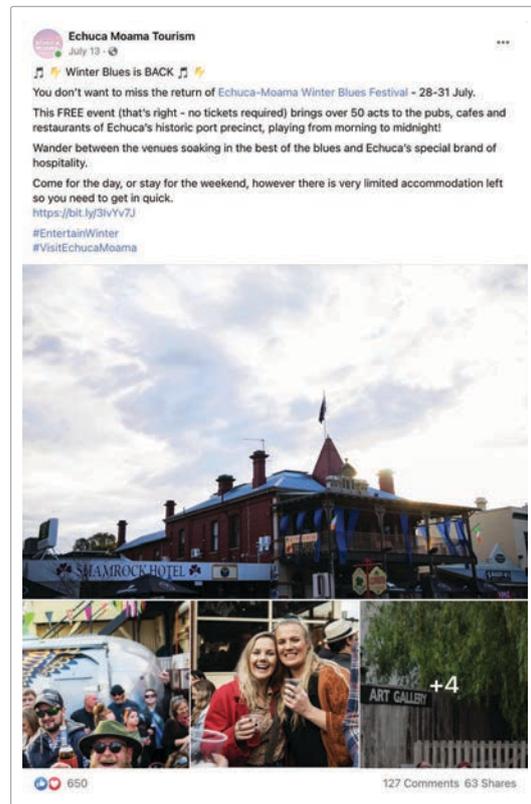
Guest Compass Web App

# SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

## Echuca Moama social media

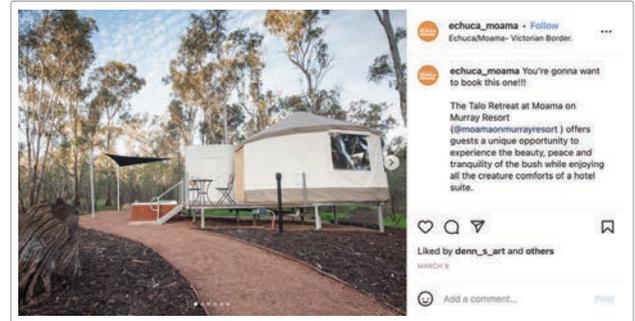
### Facebook

Facebook Page Likes	8,304
Impressions:	11,778,813 (237% increase) (10,046,782 organic, 1,664,062 paid)
Engagements:	571,125 (161% increase)
Video Views:	212.9k
Post Link Clicks:	29,936



## Instagram

Followers	3,393
Impressions:	3,915,055
Engagements:	134,196



Rank Instagram	Leading the Murray	Instagram followers (Yearly Growth)
1	Explore Bendigo	19,245 (+2,570)
2	<b>Echuca Moama</b>	<b>12,436 (+3,393)</b>
3	Visit Mildura	7,582 (+1,644)
4	Visit Albury Wodonga	6,511 (+910)
5	Visit Deniliquin	3,738 (+538)
6	Visit Swan Hill	3,311 (+341)
7	Visit River Country	1,927 (+673)
8	Visit Sun Country	1,901 (+350)

Rank Facebook	Leading the Murray	Facebook Followers (Yearly Growth)
1	Explore Bendigo	67,832 (+5,388)
2	<b>Echuca Moama</b>	<b>27,549 (+8,304)</b>
3	Visit Mildura	18,826 (+2,574)
4	Visit Deniliquin	14,704 (+121)
5	Visit River Country	9,710 (+7,986)
6	Visit Albury Wodonga	7,124 (+1,142)
7	Visit Swan Hill	5,835 (+679)
8	Visit Sun Country	4,373 (+615)



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[echucamoama.com](http://echucamoama.com)

