

## **CM14.1. Albury Wodonga Visitor Economy Trends Report - 2020**

<b>DATE</b>	28 June 2021	<b>FIL REFERENCE</b>	FIL21/00596
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No		
<b>FURTHER ENQUIRIES</b>	Sue Harper Business & Lifestyle	<b>PHONE</b>	02 6023 8262
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Sue Harper		

---

### **Purpose of Report**

To present the findings of the 2019 Albury Wodonga Visitor Economy Trends to Council.

### **Background**

The Albury 2030 Community Strategic Plan highlights the community's recognition of the benefits tourism brings to the city's economy and lifestyle offer. As a result, AlburyCity has been an active advocate and partner to the tourism industry for many years.

The Albury Wodonga 2019 – 2023 Destination Management Plan, defines the vision for the visitor economy and identifies priorities and actions required to further increase its contribution to the local and regional economy and the lifestyle offer of the cities. The primary objective includes increasing visitor numbers, length of stay and spend.

Accordingly, the Albury Wodonga Visitor Economy Trends (AWVET) report is prepared annually, in conjunction with the City of Wodonga. Data analysis is based on the calendar year with the key objective of measuring demographic, purpose and cycle of visitation, and length of stay for domestic and international visitors to Albury Wodonga. The AWVET also benchmarks Albury Wodonga against other regional destinations in NSW and Victoria.

### **Issues**

The 2020 AWVET report analysis data is provided by Tourism Research Australia (TRA) to determine the number and type of visitors to Albury Wodonga between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2020. Data is also sourced from REMPLAN, an independent agency that provides economic industry data, to determine the economic impact of tourism to the community.

In addition, the 2020 AWVET reports on visitation to [visitalburywodonga.com](http://visitalburywodonga.com), visitor enquiries at the Albury Visitor Information Centre, and measures social media engagement.

The start of 2020 was severely hampered by the effects of bushfires with air quality posing a huge risk to the visitor economy. This resulted in cancellations of some of our outdoor events and decreased participation and spectators. By mid-March, the threat of COVID-19 was becoming extremely serious, and event cancellations were inevitable. Within weeks, border closures, travel

restrictions, lock downs and public health orders prohibiting indoor and outdoor gatherings had a major effect on the entire tourism industry and our community.

The 2020 AWWET is now finalised and has been distributed to key industry stakeholders and members of the Albury Wodonga Tourism Partner Program. A copy of the report is provided (Attachment 1 – Albury Wodonga Visitor Economy Trends 2020) for the information of Councillors.

Key findings are as follows:

#### Year in Review – Key highlights

The overall economic impact to the Albury Wodonga economy was down from just over \$1B in 2019 to just over \$518M in 2020.

- The first quarter of 2020 saw an economic impact of \$26.1M directly driven by events to Albury Wodonga. By comparison the total event impact during 2019 was \$53M.
- Domestic Daytrip visitor spend per trip increased by 21% during 2020.
- Overnight visitor length of stay increased from 2.3 to 3.4 nights per trip from 2019.
- Overnight visitor spend increased from \$174 in 2019 to \$205 per day in 2020.
- The Visit Albury Wodonga team serviced 241,200 enquiries through various mediums, a 28% increase from 2019. (Primarily via the website)
- Visit Albury Wodonga Facebook and Instagram followers increased by 20% from 2019.

#### Domestic Daytrip Visitors

Domestic day visitors include anyone who is above 15 years of age and who has travelled for a round trip distance of at least 50 kilometres to visit Albury Wodonga. This may include visitors from Wangaratta, Wagga, Corowa and other nearby destinations.

Of the 686,000 day trip visitors who travelled to Albury Wodonga during 2020:

- 37% came for holiday and leisure purposes;
- 17% visited friends and relatives;
- 17% were in Albury Wodonga for business; and
- 29% visited for other reasons (this includes medical, educational etc).

During 2020, day trip visitors to Albury Wodonga spent more than \$142M, an average of \$207.00 per visitor trip.

#### Domestic Overnight Visitors

Historically, Domestic overnight visitors have formed the backbone of Albury Wodonga's tourism industry, contributing the greatest direct economic impact to the local economy.

During 2020, 301,000 domestic overnight visitors came to Albury Wodonga, resulting in a substantial decrease (63%) from the previous year. These visitors stayed on average 3.4 nights (1,299,000 nights), up from 2.3 nights on the previous year. Of these visitors:

- 28% were in Albury Wodonga for holiday and leisure purposes;
- 42% were visiting friends and relatives;

- 24% were in Albury Wodonga for business; and
- 6% were in Albury Wodonga for other reasons (this includes medical, educational etc).

Albury Wodonga's domestic overnight visitors spent an average of \$205.00 per night during 2020, resulting in an estimated total spend in excess of \$61.7M. Daily spend of domestic overnight visitors increased by \$31.00 per visitor from 2019.

#### International Visitors

TRA did not collect International Visitor data during 2020 due to international border closures and sample sizes being too small. However, we have made an estimate based on TRA international visitation across NSW and Victoria. TRA recorded an 81 per cent reduction in international visitation across NSW and Victoria for the year ended December 2020. This percentage reduction has been applied to Albury Wodonga International visitation figures recorded for the year ending December 2019 in order to estimate 2020 visitation. This figure is noted in the Economic benefit of tourism, page six (6) of the report.

#### Financial Impact

The financial impact of tourism activity in Albury Wodonga was examined using spending and visitor data from TRA and the Tourism Module of REMPLAN's Regional Economic Modelling Software. The 2020 results show tourism injected almost \$518M into the Albury Wodonga economy during 2020, a decline of 48.5 per cent from the previous year.

The key financial findings are:

	Visitors	Average daily expenditure per trip	Visitor impact
Domestic day visitors	686,000	\$207	\$142,002,000
Domestic overnight visitors	301,000	\$205	\$61,705,000
International night visitors	5050*	\$62	\$313,000
Total direct impact			\$204,020,000
Total indirect impact			\$314,639,000
Total tourism impact			\$518,659,000

### Visitor Information Centre

Visitor enquiries totalled 245,800 during 2020, with website visitation being the most popular medium, followed by Visitor Information Centre walk-ins.

Of the 245,800 enquiries:

- 237,536 were from the website, up from 170,415 during 2019.
- 5,139 were walk-ins, down from 15,303 from the previous period.
- 3,001 were by phone, up from 2,703 during 2019.
- 124 were by email, down from 222 during 2019.

### Social Media

Followers across all visitALBURYWODONGA's social platforms have grown during the reporting period. Facebook followers increased by 16.9% making it the most popular platform with 5,384 followers. Instagram followers increased by 5.9% during 2020 taking the total followers to 4,398. Twitter followers (2,508) remained consistent with previous years.

### **Risk**

- **Business Risk** – No risks identified.
- **Corporate Risk** – The visitation statistics contained in this report are based on sample data collected by Tourism Research Australia (TRA) and therefore provides an indication of visitor trends, rather than actual performance measures. TRA collects survey data from 120,000 domestic travellers and 40,000 international travellers each year.
- **WHS and Public Risk** – No risks identified.
- **Environmental Risk** – No risks identified.
- **Delivery Program Risk** – No risks identified.

### **Community Engagement**

The 2020 AWWET has been developed to assist in monitoring performance against Albury 2030 objectives and those incorporated in the Albury Wodonga 2019 – 2023 Destination Management Plan. Both were developed in collaboration with the community and industry.

The 2020 AWWET is available to download from the [visitALBURYWODONGA](#) or Invest Albury Wodonga websites. The report has been distributed to Albury Wodonga Tourism Partner Program members and key local, regional and state organisations.

### **Conclusion**

Tourism plays an important role in the social, cultural and economic vibrancy of Albury. The effect of tourism is not limited to the accommodation, cafes and restaurants, retail and personal services sectors; the indirect financial and employment benefits filter through to all but a few industries.

For eleven years, AlburyCity has been actively working to increase the industry's contribution to the sustainable growth and development of Albury and the region. Work continues to be undertaken to consolidate the Visit Albury Wodonga brand, increase and explore opportunities required for effective marketing and promotion of the destination, actively drive growth in the conference, business, sports and recreation events market, and provide high quality visitor information services and experiences.

Analysing data from the 2020 calendar year, the report shows a dramatic decrease in visitation across domestic day visitors, overnight visitors and visitor trips and international visitors when comparing against previous years. The significant economic decline that tourism had on the local economy during 2020 was attributed to the impacts of COVID-19 travel restrictions both domestically and from international border closures.

As we move forward the team is actively and aggressively working with our State Tourism agencies, Murray Regional Tourism and Destination Riverina Murray, to develop and implement marketing initiatives and campaigns to constantly amplify Albury Wodonga in visitor's consideration.

The report will continue to be produced annually, delivering comparative year on year analysis. This is to provide business critical information to guide business development, marketing strategy, creation of tactical plans, funding applications and measure performance against objectives identified in Albury's 2030 Community Strategic Plan and the Albury Wodonga 2019 – 2023 Destination Management Plan.

### **Recommendation**

That Council receives and notes the 2020 Albury Wodonga Visitor Economy Trends report.

### **Attachments**

1. Albury Wodonga Visitor Economy Trends 2020 (DOC21/145792).