



## **RiverSmart celebrates World Wetlands Day by releasing Destination Macquarie Marshes Action Plan For use on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> of February**

February 2<sup>nd</sup> is celebrated around the globe each year as World Wetlands Day to mark the occasion of the international Convention on Wetlands being signed in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971. There are now 169 countries that are parties to the Convention which promotes the wise use of wetlands and the recognition of the most special sites as Wetlands of International Importance, or Ramsar sites as they are more commonly known.

This year, RiverSmart will mark this occasion by launching the recently completed Destination Macquarie Marshes Action Plan. The preparation of this Plan was funded by the Murray Darling Basin Energise Enterprise Fund, with the work done by the Tarani Group.

Speaking at the launch, held appropriately at the Window on the Wetlands Centre in Warren, RiverSmart CEO, Dr Bill Phillips said, "This plan provides a comprehensive 'blueprint' for the relevant State government agencies, local governments, our organisation and other stakeholders for moving forward together to build increased visitor opportunities, promotions etcetera for the Macquarie Marshes as a destination."

In March 2015, Destination NSW reported that over 2.1 million domestic visitors stay on 5.3 million nights in the Central NSW Region; and a further 40,700 international visitors stay 903,000 nights. Of these, the number of those who participated in nature-based activities were as follows: 428,000 domestic visitors spent 1,303,000 nights and 32,000 international visitors spent 820,000 nights. Domestic visitors stayed 3 nights on average and spent \$199 per night. Internationals stayed 26 nights on average and spent \$103 per night.

"Given the visitor numbers provided by Destination NSW it really is a no-brainer for the Central West to move forward to add to its' suite of nature-based attractions by developing better access, signage and increased opportunities for these visitors to experience the Macquarie Marshes while in the region. The Action Plan details a range of measures and options for increasing visitation ranging through scenic flights to self-drive and guided tours," said Dr Phillips.

The Action Plan provides 64 recommendations plus a further 10 directed specifically at improving signage across the region, within and surrounding the Macquarie Marshes. It recommends the formation of a Task Force to ensure good coordination with implementing the Plan, especially among the so-called 'gateway' communities such as Warren, Coonamble, Nyngan and Brewarrina.

Concluding, Dr Phillips, said, "As the expression goes, 'build it and they will come' and we are certain that with better signage, information and some more infrastructure and access opportunities this will clearly apply to the iconic Macquarie Marshes."

### **For further information or comment:**

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