



MEDIA RELEASE

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New experiences in an ancient land

The Milparinka Heritage and Tourism Association may be small in comparison to other such organisations but what it has achieved in the last two years must be seen to be believed.

Wanting to share the stories of the land, the sky and the people, the not-for-profit organisation from the tiny remote community of Milparinka applied for state government support to help do this in a way that would engage and attract visitors from across the country and help keep itself and the other local community and localities sustainable.

As a result, \$5.2 million is being invested in tourism infrastructure and amenity across the area known as Corner Country in outback New South Wales, courtesy of the New South Wales Government.

This is a region with a local population under 1,000 and an area of 48,900 square kilometres. Bound by the Queensland and South Australian borders, towns such as Milparinka and Tibooburra and the locations of Cameron Corner and Packsaddle are at the heart of the project.

While the diverse landscape and dramatic colours are something to be seen on their own, this added investment into this area will drive new and repeat visitation to the area.

Named "Sturts Steps", a circular touring route traverses the approximate trails of Captain Charles Sturt and his party across the Corner Country and links the communities and station properties along its route. New interpretive shelters will highlight the challenges and resilience of this party that encapsulate the Australian spirit. Stories of the Aboriginal people of the area, the settlement of Europeans and the importance of the cameleers are only some of the stories that this project aims to tell.

Visitors are already seeing some of new installations across the Corner, such as the new Sturt-Kidman Centre, local Aboriginal heritage displays at Milparinka, wire sculptures of endangered mammals at the Wild Desert's Fort Grey project site and of a cameleer and camel alongside a new museum in Tibooburra.

The shelters along the touring route will be installed soon and other project elements are well advanced.

"Corner Country is the most remote yet iconic region of New South Wales. Landholders diversifying their pastoral interests, and business such as the local hotels and stores, rely on tourism for their enterprises to be sustainable. This project was a collaboration of ideas from our organisation as well as National Parks and Wildlife, West Darling Arts, the Tibooburra Local Area Land Council and more that will help support the local economy. "When the opportunity presented itself we were ready with the concept and the passion to drive it forward", says Ruth Sandow, President of Milparinka Heritage & Tourism Association and founding partner in Sturt's Steps.



Ruth, recognised for her years of contribution to tourism, was recently awarded the Dean Gorddard Award for Outstanding Contribution to Tourism by an Individual. While seeing this project through she is also busily getting ready for the peak tourism season by overseeing the seasonal volunteers who travel to Milparinka to help run the Heritage Centre and Caravan Park.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW Paul Toole said this is exactly the kind of project that the Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund is designed to deliver, and it will be a fantastic boost for the state's Far West.

"As NSW struggles through years of natural disasters and COVID lockdowns, it is through programs such as the Regional Growth Fund that we are keeping money flowing through the local economy, supporting a variety of industries and helping to lift spirits," Mr Toole said.

Minister for Western NSW Dugald Saunders the Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund is about revitalising rural communities and encouraging more people out to parts of the state they wouldn't normally consider visiting.

"Milparinka is a fantastic community worth visiting, and the Sturts Steps is another attraction to bring even more tourism into the community," Mr Saunders said.

"I congratulate the Milparinka Heritage and Tourism Association for thinking outside the box when it comes to sharing the community's rich culture and heritage."

The \$300 million Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund is part of the NSW Government's commitment to the delivery of infrastructure projects which improve the productivity and competitiveness of the state under Restart NSW.

It is one of the programs in the \$1.7 billion Regional Growth Fund, which is delivering the economic, infrastructure and lifestyle improvements that make regional NSW a great place to live, work and play.

Sturt's Steps will continue to be implemented until June 2023 and whilst tourists will have plenty to see throughout the year, they will also gain an understanding of the elements yet to come that will unquestionably entice them back a second or even third time.

More Information Contact

Lori Modde

Project Manager

lori@visitoreconomy.com.au

0415 279822