

# Media Release

**The Hon Harriet Shing MP**  
Minister for Water  
Minister for Regional Development  
Minister for Commonwealth Games Legacy  
Minister for Equality



Friday, 5 May 2023

## VICTORIA HOME TO AUSTRALIA'S FIRST FIVE-STAR RIVER CRUISE

Victoria is one step closer to building Australia's first five-star river cruise with construction starting on the luxury PS Australian Star paddlesteamer, thanks to support from the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Regional Development Harriet Shing today announced works are underway on the state-of-the-art vessel in Mildura, backed by a \$2.25 million investment from the *Regional Tourism Investment Fund*.

Coined the PS Australian Star, the project is being delivered by Murray River Paddlesteamers and will create 13 local jobs during construction and a further 16 ongoing jobs when it begins cruising in 2025.

Built locally in Mildura and operating from the Port of Echuca, the vessel will provide a luxury cruise along the Murray for up to 38 guests. Journeys of three, four and seven night stays will be available with opportunities to explore riverside communities along the way.

The PS Australian Star will feature up to 19 ensuite cabins, a fine dining restaurant and function space, a guest lounge with panoramic views and bars across two levels. It will provide accessible cabins, an elevator for access to all levels and multiple outdoor relaxation areas.

The three-deck PS Australian Star will replace the smaller 16-guest PS Emmylou paddlesteamer which currently offers overnight cruises on the Murray. The vessel includes an energy efficient hybrid diesel and a steam propulsion system featuring a refurbished 1907 wood-fired steam engine.

Tourism is big business in Echuca, with the Campaspe Local Government Area welcoming 1.1 million domestic visitors who spent around \$340 million last calendar year.

The Fund is helping entice more visitors to Victoria's regions, driving investment and boosting the tourism sector.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Harriet Shing**

*"This is an Australian-first project proudly made in regional Victoria. It will bring more people to experience the wonder of the Murray – backing local jobs, businesses and tourism in Victoria's beautiful and historic river country."*

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos**

*"The PS Australian Star will provide jobs for Victorians during construction and encourage more visitors to come to the Murray River by offering a new world-class experience."*

### **Quote attributable to Murray River Paddlesteamers Director Craig Burgess**

*"Australians love cruising, and they love the Murray River. When she sails along the Murray for the first time in 2025, PS Australian Star will offer the ultimate in river cruising luxury, ushering in a new era for tourism in Australia."*

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