

Pilot Tourism Development Program

FAQ's

1) What is the Pilot Mentor Program?

A 10-month tourism development program designed to support a small cohort of operators to improve, grow or launch a regionally significant visitor experience, with mentoring, practical focus areas and tailored development support.

2) Who is the program for?

Tourism operators in the Riverina Murray region who have the capacity to deliver a regionally significant product and/or experience.

3) What constitutes as a regionally significant experience?

Including but not limited to, a product or experience that:

- Has the capacity to attract substantial brand awareness for the Riverina Murray
- Drives significant increase in visitation to the Riverina Murray
- Has aspects that are uniquely connected to place (Riverina Murray)
- Offers something different to anything elsewhere in the state

4) I'm not "big" can I still apply?

Yes. The program isn't about size, it's about impact and regional significance. If your experience has strong growth potential and you're ready to invest time into development, you're encouraged to apply.

5) What are you looking for in an applicant?

Operators who are:

- motivated and ready to take action
- open to feedback and mentoring
- clear on what they want to improve or develop
- committed to delivering a stronger visitor experience
- able to participate across the ten months

6) How many operators will be selected?

Six operators will be selected as part of the pilot cohort based on:

- capacity to grow visitation
- alignment with regional priorities and Visitor Economy Strategy 2035
- commitment to participate in program

7) How are participants selected?

Through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process, assessed against program criteria such as:

- product/experience readiness
- uniqueness and market potential
- Regional significance

8) When does the program start and finish?

The program will run for 10 months, kicking off in February with EOIs opening and wrapping by 30th November 2026. Subject to funding from the NSW State Government.

9) What's included in the program?

You can expect:

- 1:1 onsite audit and visit
- tailored development roadmap
- monthly mentoring & capability focus areas
- networking / connection opportunities
- guidance and tools to support real business outcomes

10) What topics will the focus areas cover?

Topics will be practical and operator-relevant, we've outlined these on the program overview.

11) Is the program tailored to my business?

Yes. focus areas and support are selected in consultation, based on your goals, gaps and where your biggest opportunities are.

12) What's the time commitment?

It's designed to be manageable for busy operators, but you'll need capacity to show up for the 10 months, allocating roughly 6-12hrs p/month:

- 1-2hrs with the IDM as a check in
- 1-2hrs of webinar/case studies
- 1-2hrs of research/going through training content
- 1-2hrs of self-assessment/review/benchmark against recommendations
- 2-4hrs of implementation (this could be more)
- 1hr of feedback/reflection and progress assessment



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13) Will I need to travel?

Maybe. Some focus areas may be in-person (or hybrid) depending on location, or an opportunity may arise for you to attend, but the program is designed with regional distance in mind.

14) Is there a cost to participate?

The program is supported by Destination NSW and is free for participants. However, depending on your business goals, you may choose (or be required) to invest funds into your business in order to progress throughout the program.

15) What outcomes will I walk away with?

By the end of the program you should have:

- A clear roadmap for growth
- A stronger/more market-ready visitor experience
- Improved confidence and capability
- Practical tools/resources and milestones completed
- Better positioning for future promotion and partnerships

16) Does this guarantee marketing/promotion from DRM?

This program is primarily development-focused, not a marketing package; however, participants may receive increased visibility through storytelling and pilot program promotion.

17) Do I need to be "tourism-ready" already?

You don't need to be perfect, but you do need a base product/experience to work with, and the ability to implement improvements over the program period.

18) I'm still developing my concept — can I apply?

Yes, if it's regionally significant and your concept is well-developed and capable of being brought to market (or improved significantly) within the next 12 months.

9) Can more than one person from my business participate?

The program requires one key contact, however you're welcome to involve additional team members to support participation and progress or fill in on your behalf if absent.

20) What if I'm selected but something changes?

We get it, tourism is unpredictable. If something changes, DRM will work with you where possible; however, participation requires commitment. If you're unable to complete the program within the agreed timeframe, you may forfeit certain elements or be asked to step away from the program.

21) What happens after the pilot finishes?

Graduates will form the foundation of an ongoing Alumni Network, staying connected to future development opportunities, peer networks and potential collaboration across the DRM ecosystem.

22) Is this replacing Destination Inspiration?

No. This pilot compliments existing programs like Destination Inspiration, which is aimed at emerging operators and new product development.

- Destination Inspiration = early-stage support for new experiences
- Pilot Program = targeted development to strengthen and scale regionally significant and unique experiences

Don't fit neatly within either? That's ok. If you've got a unique idea with strong potential to drive regional visitation and impact, we'd still love to hear from you.

23) How do I apply?

Complete the Expression of Interest form online, including a short set of questions about your business, your experience, and what you want to achieve.

24) When do EOIs close?

See the DRM website for key dates. Any changes will be made updated here.

Still have questions?

Send an email to info@destinationrm.com.au and we'll be in touch!