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MORE THAN JUST MILDURA

There is more to the Mildura region than just great weather, days spent on a Murray River houseboat, rows of orange groves and vineyards and an award-winning restaurant run by celebrity chef.

Overlapping the borders of Victoria and New South Wales (NSW), and eventually South Australia (SA), the central Mildura area is a network of a dozen small towns, each with its own visible identity and history.

With a combined population of around 60,000 people, the central area comprises of historic Wentworth, laid-back Merbein, the widespread vineyards of Irymple, Red Cliffs to the south, tight-knit Dareton, and the NSW riverside towns Buronga, Gol Gol, and Trentham Cliffs.

Once one of the busiest inland ports in NSW, Wentworth was once considered as a potential site for Australia's capital city.

Located at the junction where Australia's Murray and Darling rivers meet, this riverside town is again booming thanks to the introduction of the community-minded Bendigo Bank in the early 1990s. As a result, there is plenty to see and do. Such as fine dining, boating and fishing, golf on well-irrigated greens, native bird-watching and a 'registered' ghost at the Old Wentworth Gaol.

Beyond the central network of towns are the dry-farming communities of the Mallee and the Millewa, stretching over hundreds of kilometres.

Set in-between the Murray-Sunset National Park and the Wyperfield National Park, is the wheat-belt community of the Mallee Highway stretching from Ouyen, to Walpeup, to Underbool, to Torrita, to Cowangie, to Murrayville, to the SA border.

This is sunset country, where technicolour sunsets stretch from horizon to horizon. The Mallee locals, predominantly a wheat farming community, are as proud of this wide and dry stretch of earth as they are of their history. The UNESCO-recognised Kow Plains Homestead complex of mid-1800s buildings is a well-preserved homage to the Mallee's past.

On the other side of the Sunset National Park is the easy-going wheat-belt Wimmera region, encompassing Lake Cullulleraine, Werrimul and Meringur.

The Wimmera's own Millewa Pioneer Park also pays tribute to the wheat farming region's descendants. This local-built themed park is a remarkable recreation of a turn-of-the-century township on 12 hectares of local bushland. It is an experience not to be missed on a trip to the Mildura region.

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(Images available upon request)