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## Former Pro Snowboarder calls Murray home



**When snowboarding professional and Aeronautical Maintenance Engineer David Thorpe finished his pursuits racing on the World Cup Circuit throughout the U.S and Europe, he sought other career challenges. Turning some of his interests from the snow to the water eventually led him to a key role at Malibu Boats in Albury.**

"My relationship with Malibu started out whilst I was still working for Qantas Engineering in Melbourne when I went from snowboarding competitively to starting my own event company running wakeboarding & snowboarding tours/ demo days and coaching clinics in 2001," David Thorpe said.

"Xavier West, Managing Director and founder of Malibu Boats here in Australia sponsored me with a boat for my

wakeboard tour and our friendship grew from there. I undertook further studies in business and worked in various brand management roles before Xavier approached me to take on a full-time marketing and public affairs role with the company."

Malibu Boats Pty Ltd builds premium quality American designed ski boats from scratch in a purpose built factory in Albury and distributes them throughout the Australian Asia Pacific Region. The brand has become the industry leader in design and innovation, making it the most popular family tow boat in Australia and the United States.

David had previously lived in Melbourne, and more recently the Gold Coast, but had never ventured into the Albury Wodonga region.

"I must say I definitely need to thank the Murray Now team for all their help and advice, because I'd never spent much time in the area other than up at Falls Creek I really didn't know much about the area," he said.

"A friend of mine sent me the Murray Now website address that was full of information on the area and then I got in personal contact with Nicole Doughty and the team and they were great. They even helped my girlfriend who is a teacher look for work, giving us the names of local schools and principals."

Given David had spent most of his recent time living near the coast, venturing inland was something new and a big change, but he's enjoying the Murray Region lifestyle.

"The other week I went to Beechworth mountain bike riding with a mate for the first time, I am continually exploring the area and loving it; I still can't find the beach though!" David said.

"With so many great places to go boating and all being so close of course we take the Malibu out wakeboarding with friends over the summer, and during winter it's nothing for me to travel an hour and a half up to Falls Creek to do some instructing and part time work for the mountain as well as catch up with my snowboarding buddies from Melbourne. I've also joined the Mitta Mitta Canoe Club, based here in town on the Murray River which has to be one of the best set up kayak clubs I've ever seen. There's so much to do here, you'd have to be pretty hard pressed not to find something to do on the weekends.

"If you were living in Melbourne and had enough of the city life, you could certainly look at living here because there are plenty of positives. I still get down the coast for a surf every few weeks with the drive down there and to Melbourne being so easy now with the new HWY"

Access to a range of daily flights from Albury Airport has also helped David easily catch up with family, friends and business associates inter-state.

"I don't think enough people outside Albury know that Virgin Blue flies in and out of here, it's fantastic and so easy to go back to the Gold Coast for business and some surfing when we need to."

On the career front, the former professional snowboarder has been busy helping to further build the Malibu brand, securing athlete sponsorships and product endorsements with high profile names like V8 Supercar Drivers Jamie Whincup and the Kelly Brothers. Spending time on the road and on the water over the summer months is a big part of David's role as well as developing relationships with Malibu dealers and owners along the way.

"The Malibu product has been able to lead the market when it comes to quality and performance, and this facility is the most state of the art boat building facility in the southern hemisphere, there's nothing like it," David said.

"My role is to try and expose Malibu to an even greater market and try to attract the next demographic and generation of Malibu owners. So for me to come here and work in the marine industry for Malibu, which has won its 8th consecutive Boat of the Year Award, the marketing manager's role is pretty easy!"

