



PROJECT BRIEFING | South Coast Centre of Excellence

Background

The 2019/20 bushfire crisis and COVID-19 pandemic have had a compounding effect on the South Coast tourism and hospitality industries, and its workforce.

Destination Sydney Surrounds South (DSSS) have successfully secured grant funding of \$995,023 to establish an industry-led, virtual tourism and hospitality Centre of Excellence (CoE) for the South Coast. Funding was received through the [Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund \(BLERF\)](#), jointly funded by the Commonwealth and NSW Governments.

Project objective

The industry-led project will create a pipeline of skilled workers by promoting career pathways in hospitality and tourism to encourage staff attraction and retention, whilst providing lasting careers for residents including young and Indigenous workers. Working closely with [Destination Southern NSW](#), the CoE will aid the economic recovery of bushfire-impacted Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla and Bega Valley LGAs by addressing workforce shortages; elevating visitor experiences; and supporting product diversification, to drive increased tourism yield (visitor spend), reduce seasonality and support resilient local businesses.

The CoE will support a 'career' pathway into the sector, rather than simply creating 'jobs', and address current perceptions that hospitality and tourism has limited long-term career opportunities.

To ensure cost-effective delivery, the CoE will avoid duplication in its service delivery by leveraging existing networks and training programs. Two highly qualified and experienced officers have been engaged, they are responsible for identifying opportunities and coordinating the program services and delivery.

The period of the pilot program has been extended from the initial two years by an additional six months to conclude on 31 January 2024. Success of the project during this timeframe will contribute to the long-term sustainability of the CoE.

Project inclusions

To ensure that the programs were meeting the needs of the industry, a survey was conducted to establish the nature of the skills and labour shortages across the three local government areas. The findings of this survey has provided a foundation for the delivery of the activities to support the tourism and hospitality sector on the South Coast.

The focus of the CoE is to develop programs to:

- Attract and build a pipeline of new recruits
- Develop and retain the existing workforce
- Support the owner/operators to enable them to grow and lead

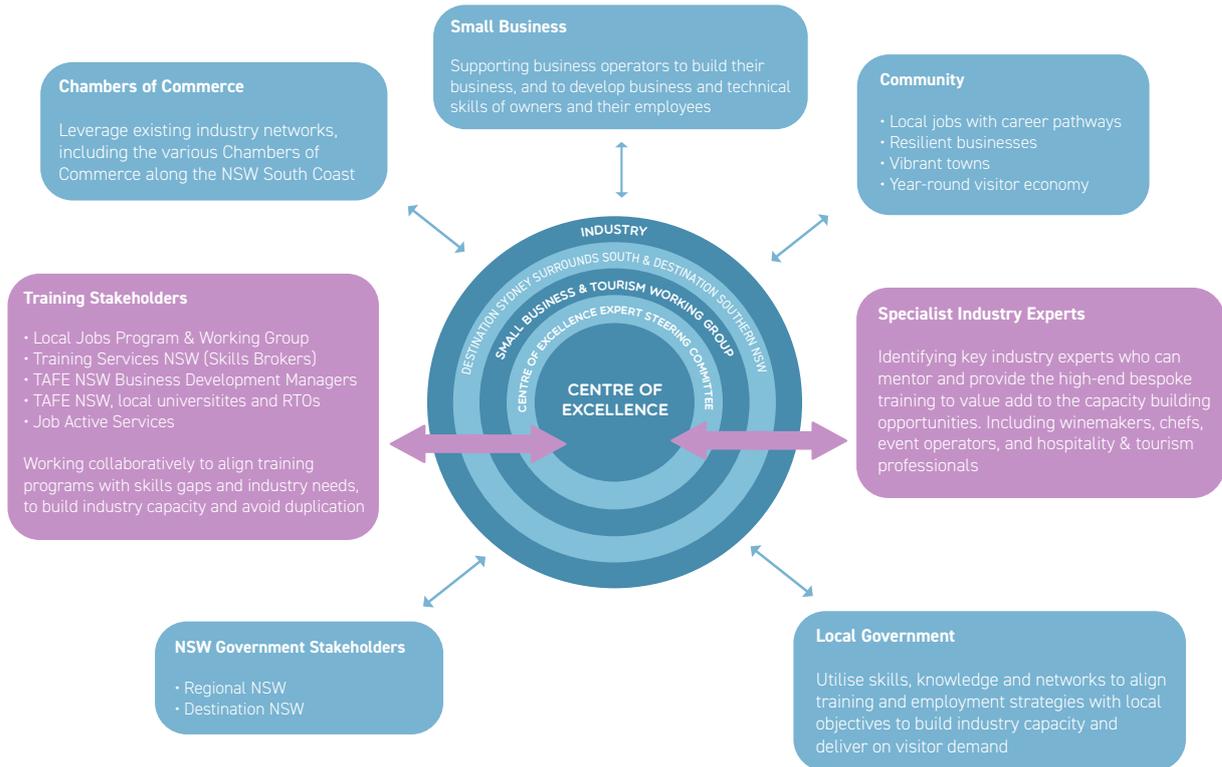
A program of activities is being designed including:

- Specialist industry training to address the skill shortages identified in the survey
- Familiarisation and site visits to build local knowledge and experience
- School-based programs to promote tourism and hospitality as a career
- Create training pathways
- Mentor programs to grow skills and confidence
- Host or cohost industry networking events

The CoE will be guided by a Steering Committee established to provide industry insights and support the delivery of the programs.



Project partners



Strategic alignment

The project aligns and will directly contribute to achieving objectives outlined in various State, Regional and Local plans and strategies, by:

- Upskilling local workers and connecting them to local employers
- Strengthening local career opportunities across hospitality and tourism industries
- Improve sector resilience by reducing seasonal visitation impacts
- Support economic recovery through encouraging higher-yield visitation

Next steps



Stay in touch for project updates, announcements will be made via the regular DSSS *Destination Download* industry update - scan the QR code here to [join our mailing list](#), and also through our [LinkedIn](#) page.

Images - front: Cupitt's Winery, Ulladulla (credit: Destination NSW) and back: Bannisters Pavilion, Mollismook Beach (credit: Bannisters Hotel).

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