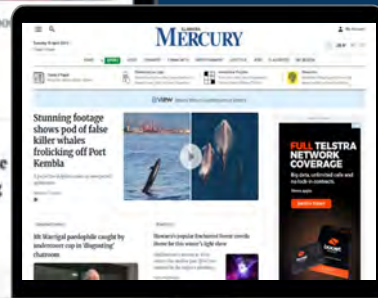


TOURISM AND MEDIA IN A CHANGING ECONOMY



WE'VE CHANGED TOO



WHO WE ARE AND WHO WE REACH





WHAT HASN'T CHANGED... THE ELEMENTS OF GOOD STORIES

- News value
- **Unique content**
- Strongly local
- Timely and topical
- Personality
- 'Need to know' factor
- People focussed
- The story behind your story
- Passion projects
- **Local success**
- Lists!
- Events
- Great images/video



25 EXPERIENCES IN 2025



Picture Destination NSW

SCRAP the unachievable new year's resolutions and centre your 2025 goals around new and enriching experiences. Grab your pen and mark off the activities as you achieve them. Can you complete 25 of these in 2025?

Ride a horse
Giddy-up! A journey upon horseback is the perfect way to connect with nature. Read more on page 26.

Watch the whales
When winter rolls around, the whales come to town. Spotting one from an on-shore vantage point or aboard a boat is spellbinding.

Visit a winery
Make 2025 the year you take the winery day out of the group chat and make it a reality. Grab a group of friends, organise a

designated driver, and sample the region's best drops.

Conquer mountain bike riding
Defy gravity in Eden, Bermagui, Narooma, Mogo, Batehaven and beyond when you take to a mountain bike trail. There are rides to suit all skill levels.

Explore via kayak
Paddle upon pristine waterways with Region 1 in the Eurobodalla. Read more on page 38.

Pick fresh fruit
There's no better way to celebrate the seasons than with a fruit picking experience on a local farm or orchard.

Attend a farmers market
Sample the freshest produce on the coast and support our Aussie farmers at a local farmers market. Read up on all the tips and tricks on page 36.

Peruse a museum
Deep dive into the history and culture of the coast with a visit to a local museum. Learn about our maritime past at the Eden Killer Whale Museum or Jervis Bay Maritime Museum.

Participate in a cooking lesson
Leave 2025 with a new set of recipes up your sleeve. Cooking demonstrations

at the Narooma Oyster Festival are an entertaining way to learn from the experts. Read more on page 31.

Try rock climbing
Scale to new heights on a supervised rock-climbing adventure.

Embark on a hike
With over 30 National Parks and nature reserves from the coast to the hinterland, the South Coast is the ultimate hiking destination. Learn about bush survival tips on pages 32 - 33.

Indulge in a spa day
Experiences don't always have to be action-packed. Book yourself in for a spa and massage relaxation treat - you deserve it!

Boogie at a music festival
Embrace live entertainment at a music festival near you. SummerSalt festival introduces Missy Higgins and John Butler trio to a Batemans Bay crowd in March, while the Wander Festival brings a diverse arts program to Pambula in October.

Dare to skydive
Hailing all adrenaline-junkies. If a regular adventure isn't enough, perhaps jumping out of a plane is for you. There are skydiving companies in Wollongong and Moruya ready to take you to new heights.

Treat yourself to fine dining
Expand your culinary horizons with a fine dining experience. Bankasia Restaurant in Pambula is a top choice.

Drink at a brewery
Show your support for Australia's independent breweries and the small family and friend teams behind them. Ask for their most unique brew and you might find your new favourite beverage.

Connect while camping
Pitch a tent, roll out a swag, or park your van and take the opportunity to disconnect from the bustle and busle and reconnect with family and friends.

Escape on a road trip
Map out a few stops from Wollongong in the north to Eden in the south and hit the road. If you're travelling with kids, the backseat binges on page 35 is a great way to beat the "Are we there yet?" question.

Unwind at an eco-stay
Make your holiday an environmentally conscious one. Wake up in nature at Tahira Beach Eco Camp or Minosa Eco Retreat in Bawley Point.

Let loose at a fun park
Unleash your inner child for your actual child! at an amusement park or water park. Page 11 highlights the Illawarra's best.

Interact with the animals
Get up close and personal with native and exotic animals at the zoo. Mogo Wildlife Park is always a hit for the whole family.

Be entertained at a theatre
Coming to a theatre near you - a diverse range of shows to entertain all! The Milton Theatre is a great place to catch performances when they hit the regional circuit.

Sit back at a cinema
On a cool or rainy day when you'd rather stay inside, why not catch a flick at an independently run cinema?

Admire at an art gallery
Marvel at the talented work of artists from near and far - let their work inspire and intrigue you. Wollongong Art Gallery regularly rotates its exhibitions.

Learn to surf
Wherever you are on the coast, there's sure to be a beach beckoning you with beginner waves.

25



Group Events Packages

We provide food & catering with different needs of packages for Birthday parties, Buck's Night, Hen's Night, Xmas Parties, Clubs, Scouts' and Guides' nights out.

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Go to www.visitshellharbour.com.au to plan your next coastal escape.



3:30

5G

Why Wollongong businesses and the Mayor are getting ready to 'paint the town red' for the Hawks



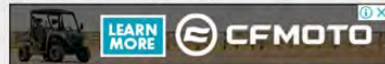
Joel Ehsman

Reporter, Published 23 March 2025



Litani's Restaurant owner Chris Agno with Wollongong Lord Mayor Tania Brown at the restaurant in Wollongong. Picture by Adam McLean

There's a buzz in town right now.



3:30

5G

Why Wollongong businesses and the Mayor are getting ready to 'paint the town red' for the Hawks



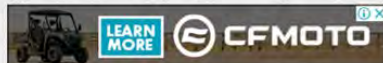
Joel Ehsman

Reporter, Published 23 March 2025



Litani's Restaurant owner Chris Agno with Wollongong Lord Mayor Tania Brown at the restaurant in Wollongong. Picture by Adam McLean

There's a buzz in town right now.



3:34

5G

Day trippers and domestic overnights up, international travellers down in Illawarra and South Coast



Joel Ehsman, Amy Blizzard

Reporter, Published 17 April 2025



Andrew and Mary Conn at Corrimal Beach Tourist Park. Picture by Adam McLean

The tourism sector of Wollongong is set for one of its busiest weekends over the Easter period on the back of more



3:30

5G

Why Wollongong businesses and the Mayor are getting ready to 'paint the town red' for the Hawks

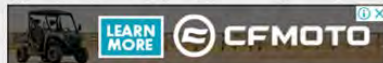


Joel Ehsman
Reporter, Published 23 March 2025



Litani's Restaurant owner Chris Agno with Wollongong Lord Mayor Tania Brown at the restaurant in Wollongong. Picture by Adam McLean

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3:34

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Reporter, Published 17 April 2025



Andrew and Mary Conn at Corrimall Beach Tourist Park. Picture by Adam McLean

The tourism sector of Wollongong is set for one of its busiest weekends over the Easter period on the back of more



3:49

5G

Business

From Skydive the Beach to across the Tasman Sea, Experience Co records best results since COVID



Joel Ehsman
Reporter, Published 03 March 2025



Main, skydivers landing at Stuart Park, top inset, instructor Luke Biggs with Ethan Turner, bottom inset, Sarah Chan landing at Stuart Park with a tandem instructor. Picture by Robert Peet

Experience Co began in 1999 as Wollongong's Skydive the Beach, with a single Cessna and an idea brought home



EVENTS



Shoalhaven, your dinner is being prepared



By Glenn Ebers
March 4, 2025 - 9:53am

0 Comments



Three friends make the best of diaspora in Dubbo cooking up Nepal's traditional dishes

A feast of tastes and flavours is ready to spread throughout the Shoalhaven.



The annual Autumn Celebration of Food has been launched, with the promise of seven weeks of plates loaded with deliciousness.

The [2024 celebration served](#) more than 8000 meals during 100 events - 77 of them sold out.




Shoalhaven Food Network President Di Laver with Gaining Through Training graduates Ebony Wollman, now studying event management at university, Alira Hopkins, working in gaming at Club Jervis Bay and Brooke Tebbut, also representing Gaining Through Training.









 LIFESTYLE

Bay Post MORUYA Kathy Sharpe

 view Bay Post Moruya Examiner's complete view of oodette


World-class shuckers save the day as Oyster Festival hits record high

 [By Tim Gray](#)
Updated May 6 2025 - 11:51am, first published May 5 2025 - 5:55pm | 0 Comments



Narooma Oyster Festival had its biggest weekend yet, with over 10,000 people slurping down some salty molluscs under perfectly blue skies.

Longtime chair for the festival, [Cath Peachey](#), said that while exact numbers are still being tallied, attendance for the event had reached a record high.



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NEWS > LATEST NEWS

Bega District News

Kathy Sharpe

VIEW

Bega District News' complete view of properties


Win a wonderfully wild winter on the Sapphire Coast!

By Ben Smyth

Updated April 9 2025 - 3:53pm, first published 3:05pm

0 Comments


An unforgettable three-night escape on the Sapphire Coast awaits one lucky couple in an incredible competition launched this week.



Win a Wonderfully Wild Winter on the Sapphire Coast with entries open until May 30, 2025

The 'Win a Wonderfully Wild Winter' competition offers the chance to experience the region's cosy charm, rich culture and culinary delights, all wrapped up into one immersive package for two people this winter.

With entries open from April 2 to May 30, this exclusive competition offers the winner a three-night stay in August at the stylish Hillcrest Motel in Merimbula, along with a series of immersive local experiences.



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South Coast

Discover the natural wonders of the South Coast, where sweeping beaches, lush forests, and charming towns beckon. Whether hiking the coastline, whale watching, or enjoying fresh seafood, the South Coast is the perfect escape for outdoor enthusiasts and beach lovers alike.

It's time to book your Easter holiday home – or risk being disappointed

Don't treat holiday homes like hotels. There's less to go around.

Sarah Falson



We have found the perfect summer escape in the heart of NSW's Sapphire Coast

Right by the crashing waves, this gorgeous retreat awaits.

Megan Doherty



NSW South Coast: Follow an art trail by the sea

Landscape is an endless inspiration to artists drawn to the Shoalhaven.

Catherine Marshall



Inside the new South Coast luxury escape at Cupitt's Estate

@xplore



Bannisters opens stunning new South Coast retreat

Explore



Summertime on the Sapphire Coast

@xplore



Take the long road to Jervis Bay

Explore



explore



FREE

WHAT'S HAPPENING
THIS SUMMER IN
YOUR REGION?

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ISSUE 2 2025
FREE

WHAT'S HAPPENING
THIS AUTUMN IN
YOUR REGION?

Eat PlayStay.

ACM
trusted voice

SUMMER IN THE Illawarra

The closest escape from the outskirts of Sydney, the Illawarra is the living heartland of the South Coast, and summer is when it truly comes alive. Embracing the joys of Watergong and Shellharbour, as well as the townships of Kiama and Gungahlin, it's just a 90 in offer families and solo travellers alike.

Spend your days dipping in idyllic rock pools, and nights frequenting the buzzing restaurants and pubs. A hub for live entertainment, big names head for and settle in and as a show for major events. Whether you want to sit in on the action or relapse the hustle and bustle, the Illawarra has something for everyone this summer.

Diggies Cafe, North Wollongong.
Picture Destination NSW

ILLARRA
MERCURY

Four rock pools to splash in this summer

ROCK pools are like nature's playpen, a huge drawcard for kids (of all ages) and those who prefer something more contained than the big wide ocean. The Illawarra is spoilt for choice when it comes to stunning options. Here are a handful to get you started.

Blowhole Point Rock Pool

A great place for the entire family, the irregular-shaped pool has various depths and a natural rock floor. A shallow wading area on one side is suitable for young children.

On the north side of Kiama's Blowhole Point, you can access the pool from Blowhole Point Road. There is plenty of parking, together with picnic tables and change rooms nearby.

Austimmer Rock Pools

These two picturesque rock pools at the southern end of Austimmer Beach are overlooked by an historic bathing pavilion, with refurbished toilets, change rooms and showers.

If you're unsure about swimming in the surf, these ocean water pools are a smart



Austimmer Rock Pools.

Picture Destination NSW

place to test your ability (and mettle), as you'll be swimming directly into the waves. Access the rock pools via Lawrence Hangrave Drive in Austimmer.

Gentleman's Pool

One of the region's earliest rock pools, the name harks back to the days when men and women swam separately. It's set in the rock platform north of the Continental Pool, on Cliff Road in North Wollongong.

Woonona Rock Pool

Less organic than some of its counterparts, this 50 metre pool has diving blocks, and a lovely old pavilion with

SAFETY FIRST

Don't be fooled by the name - rock pools carry the same risks as swimming at the beach. Surf Life Saving Illawarra duty officer, Anthony Turner, has the following advice for those playing in and around rock pools.

- Don't forget rock pools are not patrolled by lifeguards
- Teach your children how to swim and make sure you also know how to swim
- Supervise your children when you're playing in rock pools
- Have a buddy system in place
- Be familiar with tidal systems - king tides in particular can create environments akin to a washing machine
- Stay off your phone while you're near rock pools
- Do not swim in rock pools after consuming alcohol or drugs
- Rock pools are often not deep, so don't do backflips or dive into shallow water.

toilets and change rooms (only accessible via stairs), and a viewing platform. It's a great spot to swim, even when the tide is high. The rock pool is on Kuramba Road in Woonona.

WOLLONGONG ART GALLERY

A ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

A SURVEY OF LUSTRE CERAMICS

Curated by John Kuczwel

30 November 2024 - 11 May 2025

A Road Less Travelled: A Survey of Lustre Ceramics curated by local ceramicist John Kuczwel. For three decades, John Kuczwel has perfected his craft in the reduced lustre pigment ceramic technique - a method first discovered in the 9th century Islamic world. Today, only about 20 potters worldwide maintain mastery in this complex and challenging ceramic process. Kuczwel's expertise has taken him on extensive journeys to study lustreware in museums and private collections and collaborate with artisans in historical lustre production centres like Kashan, Dabbi, and Maragha. Now, he showcases his own lustre works alongside a curated survey of lustreware, both historical and modern day, from private collections. From its ancient Middle Eastern beginnings to contemporary pieces, this exhibition offers a rare glimpse into the world of Islamic art rarely seen in Australia. Historical lustre ceramics featuring works from Iran, Spain and Italy, and contemporary works by Alan Calger Smith (UK), Burton Taylor (UK), Alan Pressat (AUS), John Kuczwel (AUS), Bob Connery (AUS), Jonathan Chiswell-Jones (UK). Also included are contemporary works from Arturo Benavent (Spain) and Abbas Akbari (Iran).

Image: John Kuczwel, Dabellus, 2020. Lustre Ewer, reduced pigment lustre on earthenware clay, 38 x 20cm. Courtesy of the artist.



SHAPE SHIFTERS: A RETROSPECTIVE OF AUSTRALIAN COLLAGE

Wollongong Art Gallery

7 December 2024 - 2 March 2025

Shape Shifters is an innovative retrospective of Australian collage. Many artists, beginning in the early twentieth century, have manipulated their images with adjuncts to do many things: to correct drawings, to play with composition, to decorate, and to make social and political comment. Shape Shifters will examine how re-purposed materials, concepts and subjects have evolved within an Australian context. Works in fabric, paper, moving images, and found or domestic objects will be exhibited in a celebration of this thrilling and accessible art form. Including works by Grace Crowley, Ross Croftall, Isabel Davies, Karla Dickens, Elizabeth Gower, Barbara Harrah, Paul Higgs, George Johnson, Deborah Kelly, Evline Koz, Helen Lempriere, David McDermid, Fiona Macdonald, Bridget McLean, Elizabeth Newman, John Nixon, Carl Platt, Kurt Schraner, Gareth Santam, Samira Selig, Madeline Staunton, Ann Thomson and Meredith Tomlin.

Image: Vicki Vovropoulos, The best face (not for Autumn), 1978, synthetic polymer paint, collage of cut magazine illustrations on canvas. Wollongong Art Gallery Collection. Purchased 1981.



WOLLONGONG ART GALLERY
Corrumbilla & Burelli Streets, Wollongong
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www.wollongongartgallery.com



A special place to stay and play

WORLD renowned equestrian destination turned luxury accommodation option, there's always more than meets the eye at Willinga Park in Bawley Point.

With 16 two-bedroom and two four-bedroom pavilions nestled within the picturesque landscape, guests are now invited to stay a night or more and experience Willinga Park like never before.

Each pavilion is thoughtfully designed to deliver an atmosphere of refined relaxation, featuring air-conditioning, luxury linens, spacious living areas, fully equipped kitchens, and private outdoor spaces. The pavilions are perfect for families reconnecting, friends seeking a shared escape, or couples indulging in a romantic getaway surrounded by nature.

Beyond the pavilions, Willinga Park's facilities elevate the experience for every guest. A heated pool, fully equipped gym, and inviting barbecue area are ideal for alfresco dining, morning swims, or simply



Picture by Teri Taylor

unwinding beside. Whether celebrating a special occasion, attending an event, or looking for a peaceful escape, these amenities help make each stay both memorable and luxurious.

One of Willinga Park's highlights is its renowned sculpture walk, a self-guided tour showcasing remarkable Australian and international artworks, thoughtfully positioned across the landscape.

The botanic gardens are equally captivating, offering guests a beautiful setting for relaxation and exploration.

Willinga Park is a retreat where art, nature, and comfort converge. With exclusive accommodation, breathtaking landscapes, and thoughtful amenities, why not stay a while?

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We love the Shoalhaven

EAT

The Social, Ulladulla

"Located in the bustling Wason street off the Princes Highway surrounded by other eateries and boutique stores, The Social provides a great view with live music, local beer, wine and cocktails with delicious canapè style foods. A great atmosphere and friendly service for a girls night out or date night. Definitely worth a turn off the Highway to make a visit."

- Recommended by Madly Young, group sales manager at the Goulburn Post

PI-W

Jervis Bay Wild, Huskisson

"I highly recommend a day out with Jervis Bay Wild. At the right time of year a trip out to 'Humpback Highway' is a lot of fun and quite an experience to create memories. The staff were excellent, attentive and approachable. You can't beat the scenery of the gorgeous Jervis Bay, and these cruises are very professionally operated."

- Recommended by Jen Barnett, sales manager at the St George & Sunderland Shire Leader



Jervis Bay Wild, Picture Destination NSW

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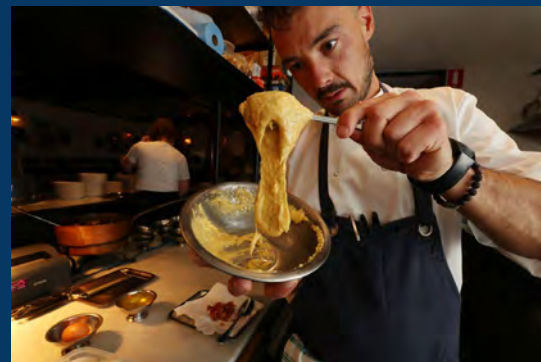
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THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE STORY





'That was me, sold': How to find the South Coast mecca for coffee lovers



By Steve Evans

Updated January 2, 2025 - 11:22am, first published 9:30am

0 Comments



If you like real coffee, Moruya is the place to head for.

The small town has two companies - Alfresco and Guerrilla Roasters - that roast beans they've bought from growers they know.



Watch Sam Blawie on the joys of roasting coffee.

Both roasteries supply the beans to cafes along the coast, so there's a direct link from the grounds in your cup to the ground where the beans

@view



Feeling hungry? Where to find the coast's best fish and chips



By Steve Evans
December 28, 2024 - 12:42pm



For many of us, fish and chips are a great guilty pleasure; we love the food but not what it does to our waistlines.

But [holidays are a time for guilty pleasures](#); so it's best to get it right. There's no point in splurging and then being disappointed. Guilt's OK but only if there's pleasure first.



WATCH: Rachael Masters of Moruya Eats explains what makes a good fish and chip shop.

Moruya Eats is a good place for a guilty splurge, and a worthy entry



HOW TO PITCH - WHAT IS YOUR STORY?

What drives your passion?

What was your journey?

What was at stake?

What makes it worth it?

What is unique about your story?

CONNECTION In storytelling, people won't remember what you say,
but they will remember how you made them feel

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On Monday and Tuesday at the Sage Hotel Wollongong, ACM marketing experts are delivering free 45 minute sessions on fresh marketing and advertising solutions with the Illawarra Mercury to grow your brand. Come and chat with me after if you would like to attend a session.



PITCH ME!

Pitch your story in a couple of lines. Get to the heart of it. Tell me why I should take notice. Tell me why my audience will care.

The pub test - don't try and be fancy.

THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME

