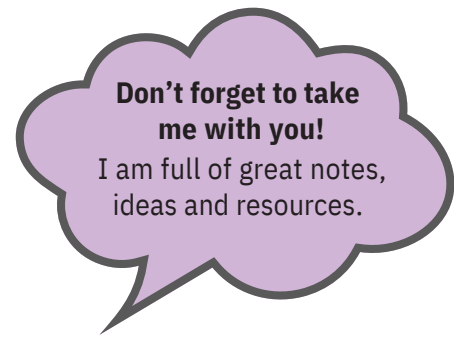


Destination  
Sydney Surrounds South



Don't forget to take  
me with you!  
I am full of great notes,  
ideas and resources.

# Visitor Economy Symposium 2026

## *From Strategy to Success*

27th May 2026 | The Pavilion Kiama



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Scan the QR code to submit your questions for our live Q&A throughout the day.

## Acknowledgement of Country

Destination Sydney Surrounds South pays our respect to Elders, past and present, and future generations of Aboriginal people. We acknowledge visitors from across Australia and around the world are made welcome on Aboriginal lands by the Traditional Custodians of NSW.

We acknowledge the significant contribution made by Aboriginal people to the development and promotion of the visitor economy.

Front cover: Image 1: DSSS Symposium 2025, Image 2: Boneyard Beach, Kiama | Credit: Destination NSW

Back cover: Saddleback Grove, Kiama | Credit: Destination NSW

## Welcome

Welcome to the Visitor Economy Symposium 2026. We hope you use this handbook to take lots of notes and write down your key takeaways. Keep it handy to review and reach out if you want to chat.

At Destination Sydney Surrounds South, we work in close partnership with Destination NSW to deliver tailored support that helps tourism businesses grow - no matter where they are on their journey. From idea to market-ready, we offer practical workshops, networking events, and tailored assistance. Our role is to guide operators through the tourism ecosystem, connecting them with the right tools, programs, and opportunities to thrive.

## Stay in the Loop

### Instagram



### LinkedIn



### Facebook



### Our Newsletter



## Key Contacts

Shannan Perry-Hall  
General Manager  
shannan@dnsss.com.au  
0418 776 640

Kylie Bushby  
Business Development Manager  
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0421 242 359

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Business Support  
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0459 346 304

## Destination Sydney Surrounds South

### Our Purpose

- We help local businesses understand the value of the visitor economy - how it creates jobs, supports small business, and drives local prosperity.
- We translate big-picture tourism strategies into practical local action - ensuring our region benefits from major state-wide campaigns and investment.
- We champion the local rollout of state government initiatives - ensuring businesses benefit from the support available to them.
- Ultimately, we exist to help grow the Visitor Economy.

### Our Role

- We help bring DNSW and Government strategy to life on the ground - helping businesses and local government benefit from major campaigns, programs and investment.
- Our footprint covers Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama, Shoalhaven and Wingecarribee local government areas.
- We support and strengthen businesses to deliver the experiences visitors want.
- We partner with local councils and regional stakeholders to align programs and resources for maximum impact.
- We deliver year-round programs that grow capability, build networks, and drive results - including:
  - Business mentoring and development programs
  - Visitor experience and product development
  - Skills, workforce and industry engagement initiatives
  - Sharing data and insights to inform decision-making
- We are independent, not-for-profit organisation funded primarily by DNSW / NSW Government.
- We operate with a small, experienced team and a professional board of directors with wide-ranging expertise and deep networks across industry, government, and community.

### Useful Industry Resources & Links

DSSS website: [dnsss.com.au](https://dnsss.com.au)

- DSSS Destination Management Plan

Destination NSW website: [destinationnsw.com.au](https://destinationnsw.com.au)

- Visitor Data and Statistics
- NSW Strategies and Plans, including the Visitor Economy Strategy 2035
- Business Development Resources, including NSW First Program

Tourism Australia website: [tourism.australia.com](https://tourism.australia.com)

Tourism Research Australia website: [tra.gov.au](https://tra.gov.au)



Scan the QR code to check out our website for more info about who we are and what we do

## Meet Our Board of Directors



**Lyndel Gray** | Chair | [lyndel.gray@dnsss.com.au](mailto:lyndel.gray@dnsss.com.au)

Lyndel has had a long career in the Australian tourism industry and most recently was the CEO of the NSW Caravan, Camping and Manufactured Housing Industry Association, a role she held for 13 years.

She was Executive Director Tourism at Destination NSW following the merger of the State's Tourism and Major Events agencies, after heading up Tourism NSW for three years from 2008 – 2011. Prior to joining Tourism NSW, Lyndel was Executive General Manager, Western Hemisphere at Tourism Australia, and responsible for its Americas, UK/ Europe, New Zealand, South Africa and Middle East operations.

She also held senior executive roles with Tourism Australia in the USA for fourteen years, from 1987 – 2001, based in New York and Los Angeles.

Lyndel's significant contribution to the Industry was recently acknowledged when she was awarded the Outstanding Contribution by an Individual at the 2024 NSW Tourism Awards.



**Libby Cupitt** | Director | [libby.cupitt@dnsss.com.au](mailto:libby.cupitt@dnsss.com.au)

Libby Cupitt has 15 years of experience in the hospitality, tourism, and wine industries and is the Strategic Partnerships Manager at Cupitt's Estate, a renowned family-operated hospitality and tourism business in Ulladulla. Libby serves on the Executive Committee for the Shoalhaven Coast Wine Association, South Coast Tourism Industry Association, and South Coast Food Alliance.

As a problem solver, connector, and advocate, Libby has built strong partnerships that have meaningfully impacted the broader tourism community. Her strategic thinking and ability to engage with stakeholders have driven successful initiatives that enhance the region's tourism offerings.

Libby's background as a town planner and her hands-on experience in the tourism industry gives her a unique perspective in her board role.

Her understanding of urban planning and focus on sustainable development allow her to help shape strategies that support growth and prosperity in the Sydney Surrounds South region. Her love for travel, exploring local food scenes, and discovering great wine align perfectly with her work in hospitality and tourism. These passions inspire her to create unforgettable visitor experiences and contribute to the region's reputation as a must-visit destination.



**Mark Bourne** | Director | [mark.bourne@dnsss.com.au](mailto:mark.bourne@dnsss.com.au)

Mark Bourne has over 25 years' experience in the wine industry with several wine and agri-tourism businesses based in the Southern Highlands. Mark was the founding president of the Southern Highlands vignerons association and has led the region twice more over a 20 year period in the food and wine sectors. As a respected strategic thinker and advocate he is highly skilled in business management, event planning and delivery, industry research innovation and technology, coupled with strong communication and media skills. He is a member of the steering committee for the NSW government AgSkilled program and is a member of both the NSW and Australian wine industry biosecurity committees.

Mr Bourne is the current chair of the board and president of the NSW Wine Industry Association and a board member of the national wine industry peak organisation, Australian Grape and Wine. Mark is also a director at Charles Sturt University responsible for industry and research partnerships in horticulture and agriculture, with a particular focus on digital, data and sustainability outcomes. His strong passion for agriculture, tourism and regional visitor economy growth alongside his experience in advocacy is a valuable asset to the DSSS board.



**Roger Stephan** | Director | [roger.stephan@dnsss.com.au](mailto:roger.stephan@dnsss.com.au)

Roger Stephan worked in senior roles in and for State and Local Government for over thirty years including ten years as CEO of Hunter Councils and CEO of Strategic Services Australia Ltd – growing the latter to be one of the largest and most diverse local government-owned suppliers of services in the country.

As a consultant, Roger specialised in business development, corporate strategy, corporate governance and the Visitor Economy. For a period of time, he was CEO of Tourism Hunter.

Roger is currently CEO of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation, a Board Member of RDA Illawarra Shoalhaven and is at the forefront of strategies to build strategic alignment between government at all levels and the business sector.



**Dave Campbell** | Director | [dave.campbell@dnsss.com.au](mailto:dave.campbell@dnsss.com.au)

Dave Campbell is a creative director, start-up founder, and business development consultant, renowned for his expertise in culture, strategy, and growth. With a background in hospitality, tourism, and the startup sector, Dave has established himself as a natural leader and an entrepreneur with a keen eye for creative development, partnerships, communication, and strategy.

Dave has worked as Executive Chef in Australia, London, New York, and Los Angeles. As the founder of Ducking Good Social in 2008, Dave pioneered a consultancy arm that partnered with primary producers to enhance the value of their products. Through his consultancy, Dave has provided invaluable guidance in product and concept development, business planning, technology, talent and culture, and recruitment and retention planning. Dave's career includes founding and operating two Sydney-based restaurants and two South Coast NSW restaurants, where he cultivated partnerships with key stakeholders, fostering domestic and international tourism for the region. Currently serving on the Operational Management team at The Shellharbour Club, a members-owned nonprofit organisation, Dave oversees strategic and development planning for multiple venues.

## Visitor Economy Symposium 2026 Program

### *From Strategy to Success*

*Knowledge and Collaboration in Action*

From Strategy to Success: Knowledge and Collaboration in Action reflects the next stage in strengthening the visitor economy across our region. As the industry works to deliver the ambitions of the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2035, success will depend on how effectively we share knowledge, build capability, and work together.

This year's Symposium will focus on practical insights, collaboration and real-world examples that support Industry to turn strategy into action. By bringing people together to learn, connect and share ideas, the event will help ensure our region is well positioned to grow a strong, sustainable and competitive visitor economy.

TIME	DETAILS
8:30am	<b>Registrations Open &amp; Morning Networking Over Coffee</b> <i>ATDW check in with Kylie Bushby, Industry Development Manager, DSSS</i>
9.20am	<b>Welcome to Country</b> <i>Aunty Gwenda Jarrett, Wodi Wodi Elder</i>
9:30am	<b>Intro from MC</b> <i>Felicia Mariani - Felicia is a highly regarded industry expert, proven facilitator and someone who's deeply passionate about the industry.</i>
9:45am	<b>Our Role and Vision for Success</b> <i>Lyndel Gray, Chair, DSSS</i>
9:55am	<b>Making the Most of DSSS Support</b> <i>Shannan Perry-Hall, General Manager, DSSS</i>
10:10am	<b>Data and Your Decision-Making</b> <i>Peter Firth, Director, <a href="#">FiftyFive5</a></i>  Harness the power of data to uncover your best prospects and craft the experiences that keep them coming back, then explore the DNSW resources designed to help you do it better.
10:50am	<b>New Partnerships – Get Ready for Collaboration</b> <i>Despina Karatzis, Founder, <a href="#">Institute of Excellence</a></i>  This session is designed to identify new partnerships and create more opportunities for collaboration with businesses in the room.
11:20am	<b>Taking Business to the Global Stage!</b> <i>Rob Pennicott, Founder, <a href="#">Pennicott Wilderness Journeys</a></i>  Rob has taken his business from strength to strength. He is a highly respected multi-award winner and a champion of eco-adventure and conservation projects across Australia. His reputation as a Hall of Fame tourism product on the national stage has been cemented through the continual re-invention of his operation and his ongoing commitment to excellence in everything he does.
11:50am	<b>Telling Your Story</b> Media is one of your most powerful partners. Learn how to engage them effectively in this candid panel discussion with industry insiders.  <i>Fairlie Hamilton, Radio presenter, Podcaster, Content Creator, <a href="#">The Presenting Coach</a></i> <i>Ali Longhurst, General Manager, <a href="#">Wave FM, Wollongong</a></i> <i>Rob Pennicott, Founder, <a href="#">Pennicott Wilderness Journeys</a></i>  <i>Facilitated by Coralie McCarthy, Director, <a href="#">Business Illawarra</a></i>

## Visitor Economy Symposium 2026 Program

### *From Strategy to Success*

*Knowledge and Collaboration in Action*

12:30pm	<b>LUNCH – A great opportunity to build your network. Remember to sign up for your afternoon Deep Dive!</b>		
1:15pm	<b>Welcome Back</b> <i>Felicia Mariani</i>		
1:20pm	<b>Hear from the CEO of DNSW</b> <i>Karen Jones, CEO <a href="#">DNSW</a></i>  <b>Followed by a Fireside Chat</b> <i>Facilitated by Lyndel Gray, Chair, DSSS</i>		
1:50pm	<b>Deep Dive Sessions</b>		
	<b>Session 1: Packaging for Profit</b>  Join Despina Karatzis, <a href="#">Institute of Excellence</a> to dive into smart targeting and bigger impact. Explore practical strategies for getting your product seen by the right audience at the right time.  <i>Facilitated by Dave Campbell</i>	<b>Session 2: Workforce Solutions in Action</b>  Join a panel of federal, state and regional workforce experts as they discuss the programs, partnerships and practical initiatives helping attract, train and retain tourism and hospitality workers. This session will provide insights, opportunities and practical ways businesses can connect and benefit.  <i>Facilitated by Roger Stephan</i>	<b>Session 3: Leveraging the Power of Tourism Managers</b>  Hear directly from Tourism Managers across our region as they share how they're leveraging the event calendar to spread opportunity and marketing to support your business.  <i>Facilitated by Libby Cupitt</i>
1:55pm	<b>Round 1 of Breakout Sessions (Session 1, 2 and 3 running concurrently)</b>		
2:40pm	<b>Grab &amp; Go Afternoon Tea - Mini Break – 15mins</b>		
2:55pm	<b>Round 2 of Breakout Sessions (Session 1, 2 and 3 running concurrently)</b>		
3:45pm	<b>Welcome Back</b> <i>Felicia Mariani</i>		
3:50pm	<b>Local Government Supporting Visitor Economy Growth</b> <i>Local Government CEO Panel</i>  Hear from Local Government leaders on how they are working to attract investment that will benefit the Visitor Economy.		
4.30pm	<b>WRAP UP – Key learnings from the day</b> <i>Felicia Mariani</i>  Networking over refreshments with event concluding at 6pm.		

## Your MC



**Felicia Mariani**  
2026 Symposium MC

Felicia Mariani is a dynamic leader with more than 30 years of experience shaping the visitor economy across tourism, events and hospitality. Her executive career spans some of Australia's most influential tourism organisations, including Tourism Tasmania, Tourism Sydney, the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC), and Tourism Victoria/VIC Tourism Industry Council. A trusted non-executive director, strategic advisor and passionate mentor, Felicia is recognised for her ability to drive organisational transformation, build high-impact strategies and champion innovation that challenges the status quo. She brings deep expertise in governance, stakeholder engagement and government relations, and is equally committed to developing the next generation of industry leaders. A highly regarded facilitator and industry voice, Felicia is the perfect guide for a day focused on turning strategy into action.

## Making the Most of DSSS Support



**Shannan Perry-Hall**  
General Manager, DSSS

Shannan has a proven track record of delivering projects between government and the private sector, with a strong background in tourism investment and product development.

Shannan has previously worked at the South Australian Tourism Commission, Flinders University, Parks Australia and Shoalhaven City Council. Hailing from Bawley Point in the southern Shoalhaven, Shannan returned to the area some years ago to take up a management role at Booderee National Park. During her time at Council, Shannan was responsible for tourism investment and product development, including securing grant funding for a series of multi-million dollar projects to support the local visitor economy.

Immediately prior to joining Destination Sydney Surrounds South (DSSS), Shannan led the post bushfire tourism and economic recovery for the Shoalhaven region and held the role of acting Tourism Manager at Shoalhaven City Council.

### What's your number one takeaway from this session?

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## Data and Your Decision-Making



**Peter Firth**  
*Director, FiftyFive5*

Peter Firth is a Director at Fiftyfive5, a leading research and strategy consultancy, where he specialises in helping organisations identify demand-led growth through audience and behavioural insights. Drawing on multi-source data, Peter works with businesses to cut through complexity and find the clearest path to growth: understanding not just who their customers are, but why they make the decisions they do.

### DNSW Visitor Economy State of Play research

Destination NSW’s NSW Visitor Experiences: State of Play research highlights the growing demand for experience-led travel, with visitors increasingly seeking meaningful connections to nature, culture, wellness, food, community and immersive regional experiences.

The research reinforces strong opportunities across sectors already thriving within our region, including wellness tourism, agritourism, Aboriginal cultural experiences, outdoor adventure, nature-based tourism and premium accommodation offerings.

The insights have been designed to help tourism businesses better understand changing visitor expectations, emerging travel trends and future opportunities for product development and collaboration across the visitor economy.



**Scan the QR code to learn more about State of Play research**

### What’s your number one takeaway from this session?

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## New Partnerships - Get Ready for Collaboration



**Despina Karatzis**

*Founder, Institute of Excellence*


Despina Karatzias is the founder of the Institute of Excellence, a training and development organisation dedicated to building the skills, confidence and digital capability of tourism operators and small businesses. Since 2014, Despina has worked across the visitor economy to simplify the complex by delivering practical, accessible programs in digital marketing, content strategy, business growth and customer experience. She also hosts The Tourism Hub Podcast, amplifying authentic voices from across the industry.

“If you want to go fast, go alone.  
If you want to go far, go together.”


J O F O S T E R



### Stay connected with Despina

 [despina@instituteofexcellence.com](mailto:despina@instituteofexcellence.com)

 [www.facebook.com/DespinaKaratzias](https://www.facebook.com/DespinaKaratzias) / <https://www.facebook.com/BeExcellentHQ>

 [@desikaratzias](https://www.instagram.com/desikaratzias) / [@BeExcellentHQ](https://www.instagram.com/BeExcellentHQ)

**What’s your number one takeaway from this session?**

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## Taking Business to the Global Stage!



**Rob Pennicott**  
*Founder, Pennicott Wilderness Journeys*

Rob has taken his business from strength to strength. He is a highly respected multi-award winner and a champion of eco-adventure and conservation projects across Australia. His reputation as a Hall of Fame tourism product on the national stage has been cemented through the continual re-invention of his operation and his ongoing commitment to excellence in everything he does.

*“It made sense for Rob to do more. He transformed into a fisherman-come-tour-guide (he’d never leave fishing) and launched his first tourism product - Bruny Island Cruises in 1999. As time passed, he excitedly came into Tourism Tasmania, showing off his Antarctic-style head-to-toe ‘smocks’ that he’d dress his guests in to keep them cosy. He knew he was onto something special.*

*Not everyone thought he was sensible – introducing rigid inflatable boats where his guests had no protection from the wild Southern Ocean seemed a bit nuts. But for Rob, this was the whole idea. He wanted these visitors to feel the sea spray, to taste salt on their lips and feel the rush of wind through their hair. It wasn’t about protection, but about an intimate meeting with his watery playground.*

*He didn’t stop there. He wanted to do more. Rob not only wanted to show off his backyard in all its rugged glory but he wanted to conserve it for his children and theirs. So as his tourism products developed, so did his drive for sustainability and conservation. No wonder he was one of National Geographic’s Traveler of the Year recipients for 2012 – an award for ‘world-shaking people on innovative missions.’ This man was special.” Alice Hansen, Tailored Tasmania*

### What’s your number one takeaway from this session?

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## Telling Your Story

# BUSINESS ILLAWARRA



### **Coralie McCarthy**

*Director, Business Illawarra*

Through Business Illawarra, Coralie represents thousands of businesses across the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Southern Highlands and working with all levels of government to influence policy, secure investment and shape regional growth. With a career spanning business, local government and state and federal advocacy, Coralie brings a whole-of-system lens to economic development — and a deep, personal understanding of what it takes to build resilient regional communities. She has led communication and advocacy through some of Australia's most challenging periods, from the Black Summer fires to COVID-19, and is widely recognised as a trusted connector who brings diverse stakeholders together around a shared vision.



### **Fairlie Hamilton**

*Radio Presenter, Podcaster and Content Creator, The Presenting Coach*

Fairlie has more than 20 years of experience across the media industry. From hosting breakfast radio and interviewing high-profile guests to launching her own podcast, 40 With A Newborn, Fairlie has built her career on helping people communicate with authenticity and confidence. Through her business, The Presenting Coach, she now works with individuals and organisations to find their voice, own their message and connect meaningfully with their audiences.



### **Ali Longhurst**

*General Manager, WAVE FM, Wollongong*

With 15 years as a radio producer and more than five years as a Content Director, Ali understands from the ground up what makes people listen, react and stay loyal and how media partnerships can be a powerful tool for businesses ready to tell their story. Her experience across radio, advertising, promotions and leadership gives her a rare combination of creative instinct and commercial insight, making her a compelling voice on what it really takes to cut through in today's media landscape.



### **Rob Pennicott**

*Founder, Pennicott Wilderness Journeys*

Rob has taken his business from strength to strength. He is a highly respected multi-award winner and a champion of eco-adventure and conservation projects across Australia. His reputation as a Hall of Fame tourism product on the national stage has been cemented through the continual re-invention of his operation and his ongoing commitment to excellence in everything he does.



## Destination NSW

Destination NSW (DNSW) is the NSW Government’s lead tourism and major events agency, responsible for growing the state’s visitor economy through destination marketing, industry development, major events, aviation growth, business events, investment attraction and visitor economy strategy.

DNSW operates across both consumer and industry-facing platforms, including the official consumer website [www.visitnsw.com](http://www.visitnsw.com), alongside their corporate and industry support platform [destinationnsw.com.au](http://destinationnsw.com.au)

Destination Sydney Surrounds South is one of seven Destination Networks across NSW, working as the regional “boots on the ground” connection between DNSW, councils, industry operators and local tourism stakeholders.

Our role is to help connect businesses into state-led programs, opportunities, training, funding, industry development initiatives and strategic visitor economy priorities while also ensuring regional voices, challenges and opportunities are represented at a state level.

Learn more:



### NSW First Program

The NSW First Program is DNSW’s flagship industry development program designed to help visitor economy businesses develop, promote and sell world-class visitor experiences.

The program delivers practical workshops, webinars, online learning, guides, case studies and resources for tourism and hospitality businesses across NSW.

**DEVELOP**

Supporting businesses to strengthen and evolve their visitor experiences through product development, accessibility, wellness tourism, agritourism, sustainability and experience design.

**PROMOTE**

Helping businesses improve their marketing capability through digital marketing, media, storytelling, social media, ATDW, content development and destination alignment.

**SELL**

Supporting operators to become distribution ready through domestic and international trade, online travel agents (OTAs), commissionable products, inbound tourism and export market development.

Learn more:



### Visitor Economy Strategy 2035

The NSW Government’s Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 sets an ambitious roadmap to grow the state’s visitor economy to \$91 billion annually by 2035.

**Key focus areas include:**

- Major events and cultural events
- Business events growth
- Aviation attraction and airline connectivity
- Accommodation investment and hotel development
- Regional product and experience development
- Agritourism and nature-based tourism
- Workforce and skills development
- Accessibility and inclusion
- Data, research and visitor insights
- International trade and export readiness

The strategy highlights the importance of strong collaboration between government, industry and regional Destination Networks to support sustainable visitor economy growth across NSW

Learn more:





## Deep Dive Sessions

### Session 1: Packaging for Profit

Join Despina Karatzis, Institute of Excellence to dive into smart targeting and bigger impact. Explore practical strategies for getting your product seen by the right audience at the right time.

#### Key Takeaways

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### Session 2: Workforce Solutions in Action

Join a panel of federal, state and regional workforce experts as they discuss the programs, partnerships and practical initiatives helping attract, train and retain tourism and hospitality workers. This session will provide insights, opportunities and practical ways businesses can connect and benefit.

#### Key Takeaways

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### Session 3: Leveraging the Power of Tourism Managers

Hear directly from Tourism Managers across our region as they share how they're leveraging the event calendar to spread opportunity and marketing to support your business.

#### Key Takeaways

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## Local Government Supporting Visitor Economy Growth



### **Greg Doyle**

*General Manager, Wollongong City Council*

Greg was first appointed to the role in 2019 after a long career within the organisation across infrastructure, community services and corporate leadership. A University of Wollongong graduate with a Masters of Policy, Greg is a passionate advocate for Wollongong's growth as a destination – backing major events and investing in tourism assets that continue to raise the city's national profile.



### **Wayde Peterson**

*CEO, Shellharbour City Council*

Wayde's current role as CEO represents the culmination of a career spent entirely in local government; beginning as the council's first Engineering Cadet in 2000 and rising through to Executive Director Business Enterprises before stepping into the top job. A proud product of the community he now leads, Wayde has spent more than 30 years volunteering with surf lifesaving and coaching junior football, and brings that same commitment to connection and service to his role at the helm of Shellharbour City Council. His grounded, community-first perspective makes him a compelling voice on how local government can create the conditions for a thriving visitor economy.



### **Jane Stroud**

*CEO, Kiama Municipal Council*

Jane has been CEO of Kiama Municipal Council since 2021, bringing with her a strong background in local government and strategic planning developed across senior leadership roles in Queensland, including Deputy CEO at Logan City Council and Director at Southern Downs Regional Council. Leading a team of more than 500 staff, Jane oversees the full operational scope of Kiama Council, with a clear focus on financial sustainability, transparency and long-term strategic thinking.



### **Andrew Constance**

*CEO, Shoalhaven City Council*

Andrew has two decades of experience in NSW state politics, including senior Cabinet roles spanning Treasury, Finance, Transport and Infrastructure. As Treasurer, he was a key architect of the state's asset recycling strategy and played a central role in delivering the \$72.2 billion transport program that includes the Sydney Metro. Now leading one of the region's most dynamic councils, Andrew brings serious economic and policy credentials to the question of how local government can attract investment and drive lasting growth in the visitor economy.



## Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)

Operators who selected “Yes” or “Undecided” for ATDW support during Symposium registration will have received information from our team in the lead up to the event outlining how to connect directly with the ATDW team and arrange a free one-on-one Profile Optimisation Session.

ATDW listings continue to play an important role in how tourism businesses are displayed across the official NSW tourism ecosystem, including Destination NSW’s consumer-facing [visitnsw.com](https://www.visitnsw.com) website.

### Recommended First Steps

- Search for your business on [visitnsw.com.au](https://www.visitnsw.com.au) or [www.atdw.com.au/our-listings](https://www.atdw.com.au/our-listings)
- Review your images, descriptions and product information
- Explore how other operators are presenting their experiences
- Ensure your business details and booking links are current

### Helpful Resources

- ATDW Support Hub - <https://support.atdw.com.au/en/>
- Book a Free ATDW Optimisation Session - [www.atdw.com.au/forms/Optimisation](https://www.atdw.com.au/forms/Optimisation)
- ATDW Operator Guidelines - <https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/destination-nsw-business-support/get-connected/atdw-online-operator-guidelines>

We also encourage operators to revisit the recent ATDW Essentials for Operators Webinar delivered in partnership with Destination Networks across NSW. The session provides a practical overview of listings, deals, imagery, Google Business integration and optimisation opportunities.

Watch the Webinar Recording:



### Key Takeaways

- High-quality imagery matters avoid text overlays and ensure image credits are included
- Deals can be added directly through ATDW and feed into Visit NSW
- Listings should include direct booking pathways where possible
- Google My Business integration can strengthen visibility and search presence
- Optimisation sessions are tailored specifically to your business and listing setup

Throughout the Symposium, Kylie Bushby will have her laptop available for operators wanting assistance reviewing their listings or booking an optimisation session with the ATDW team.



Scan the QR code to book a free optimisation session



## Upcoming Industry Workshops



### NSW Tourism Awards - Planning for success

Wed 10 June | 1.00pm - 2.00pm | Online



### Wellness Experience Development Workshop

Thursday 18 June | 10.00am - 1.00pm | Crooked River Estate, Gerringong



### Upcoming DSSS Visitor Economy Insights Webinar series

Hosted the second Wednesday of every month | 1.00pm - 2.00pm  
8th July | 12 August | 9 September | 14 October | 11 November | 9 December

## Destination NSW First Program



### Non-Visible Disability

4 June | 10.30am-11.30am | Online

### Inclusive and accessible events

18 June | 10.30am-11.30am | Online

### On-Demand webinars available covering topics

- NSW Visitor Experiences State of Play
- Digital Skills Future Ready
- Creating Wellness experiences
- Creating Nature-based experiences
- Accessible and Inclusive Webinar Series
- Creating unforgettable Cruise shore experiences
- Creating Agritourism experiences

### NSW First Program



### Content Library



### Resource Hub



### Media Centre



## Celebrate Your Business!

### NSW Tourism Awards

Applications are now open for the 2026 NSW Tourism Awards, an opportunity for tourism businesses to benchmark performance, strengthen business strategy, gain valuable industry recognition and showcase excellence on both the state and national stage. The awards celebrate innovation, professionalism and business excellence across NSW's visitor economy.

The NSW Tourism Association recently hosted its "Why Enter the Tourism Awards?" webinar, designed to help demystify the process and highlight the many benefits of participation beyond simply winning.

Operators entering the awards can also access the NSW Tourism Association Entrant Support Program, which includes practical webinars, guidance resources and new for 2026, a dedicated mentoring program offering one-on-one support from experienced judges and industry professionals to help strengthen submissions and build confidence throughout the process.

Learn more:



### 2026 IMB Bank Illawarra Business Awards

Entries are now open for the 2026 IMB Bank Illawarra Business Awards, celebrating business excellence, innovation and leadership across the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Southern Highlands. The awards provide a fantastic opportunity for businesses to reflect on achievements, benchmark performance, strengthen business strategy and gain valuable regional recognition.

With categories spanning tourism, sustainability, innovation, workplace wellbeing, customer service and business excellence, the program recognises businesses of all sizes across the region.

Applications close Wednesday 10 June 2026.

Learn more:



## Thank You For Joining Us

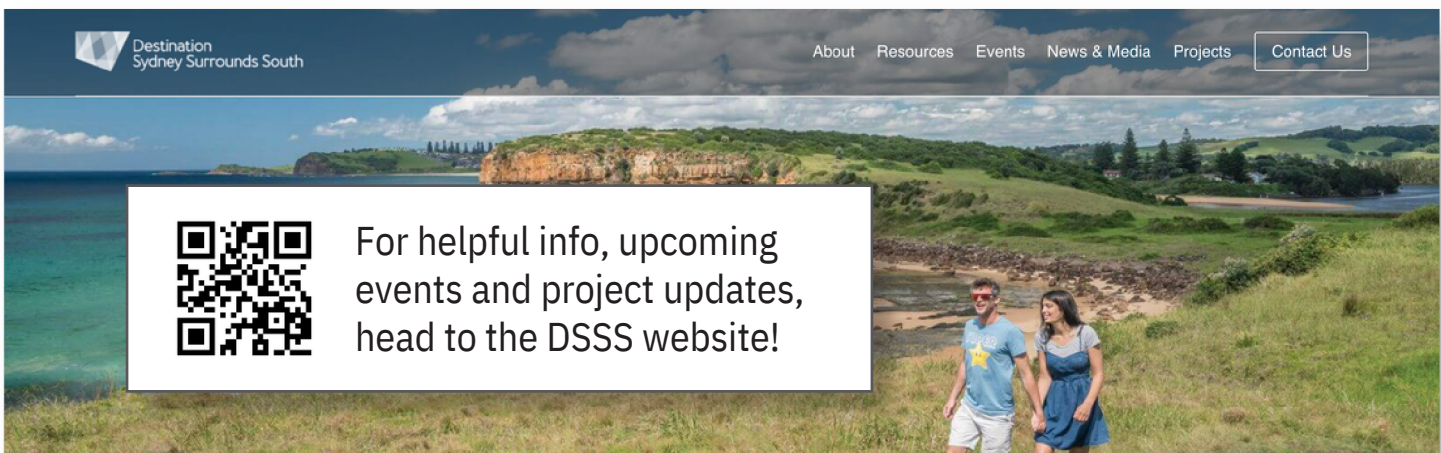
Thank you for being a part of our 2026 Visitor Economy Symposium. We hope you enjoyed the day, learnt something new and built your network of industry contacts.

We know that working in the tourism and hospitality industry can be challenging sometimes, but please know that you're not alone and there are a number of resources designed to support you and your business.

We encourage you to use the QR codes within this workbook to explore these handy resources, connect with industry, and stay in the know for future learning and development opportunities.

### To-Do List (Put your learnings from today into action!)

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# Visitor Economy Symposium 2026

## *From Strategy to Success*

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