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MEDIA RELEASE

THE HUNTER REGION IS SET TO TRANSFORM INTO A PREMIER GLOBAL TOURISM DESTINATION

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The ten councils of the region, through the Hunter Joint Organisation, in partnership with the Newcastle Airport and Destination Sydney Surrounds North have released the Hunter Tourism Strategy and supporting Business Case in the lead up to the Newcastle Airport's opening of their International Terminal next year.

Aimed at increasing international visitation and the duration of stays in the Hunter Region, this ambitious plan, rooted in extensive research and strategic planning, marks a pivotal moment in the region's tourism industry, outlining how we can bring substantial economic and cultural benefits to the local community.

The initiative focuses on leveraging the Hunter Region's unique attractions, world-renowned vineyards, rich cultural heritage, breathtaking landscapes, and some of Australia's, if not the world's, finest beaches to captivate international tourists.

The detailed Business Case and Tourism Strategy was funded by the NSW Government and outlines an ambitious roadmap to elevate the Hunter Region's status on the global tourism map.

Local destinations and industry in Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Hunter Valley, Maitland and Port Stephens are positive about the recommendations and can see the benefit of working together under a Hunter regional identity to provide more offerings to the international tourist. Other recommendations include local business grants and mentoring programs, especially supporting first nations, and aims to unlock the full potential of the region's tourism sector.

The Hunter Joint Organisation Chairperson, Singleton Mayor Sue Moore, outlines the grand vision for the Hunter, saying "We're aiming for the Hunter to be a globally connected and economically thriving city-region, serving as an international gateway while providing its communities with a vibrant and unique lifestyle. "

Deputy Chair of the Hunter Joint Organisation, Cessnock Mayor Jay Suvaal expressed enthusiasm for the project, stating, "This initiative is about more than just boosting tourism numbers; it's about enriching our community, supporting local businesses, and creating a sustainable future for the Hunter Region, but also catalysing a wave of economic and social benefits that will uplift the entire region."

With full support behind the project, Glenn Caldwell, General Manager Destination Sydney Surrounds North states "By working together across the broader Hunter Region, we can enhance our appeal to international visitors and invite the world to experience the beauty and vibrancy of the Hunter"



Newcastle Airport CEO, Dr. Peter Cock spoke to the launch.

"As we approach the opening of our international terminal next year, the launch of the Hunter Tourism Strategy and supporting Business Case is a testament to the commitment to elevating the Hunter Region's global presence."

"This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for connectivity, is set to unlock significant economic and cultural benefits. This collaborative effort with the Hunter Joint Organisation and Destination Sydney Surrounds North will drive international visitation and enrich the community. Together, we aim to showcase the Hunter's unique attractions and enhance its reputation as a premier destination for international tourists." Said Dr. Cock

The recommendations in the Strategy are a result of a collaborative effort between the Hunter Joint Organisation, Newcastle Airport, Destination Sydney Surrounds North, and key players in the tourism industry, reflecting a shared commitment to the sustainable growth of the region's tourism sector.

Newcastle Tourism Industry Group, a leading voice driving Newcastle's visitor economy is paving the way in regional collaboration by bringing together the Hunter region's tourism industry for an event on the 19th of June to learn about the future vision for the Hunter region's economy and the Global Tourism initiative. Kim Carland, Program Lead from Hunter Joint Organisation will be joined by CEO Newcastle Airport, Peter Cock and Port of Newcastle's CEO Craig Carmody to give an overview of the Hunter's international gateway opportunities.

Key messages and expected benefits from increasing international tourism:

Support for Local Businesses and Jobs: The initiative highlights the critical role of tourism in supporting a wide array of local businesses - from cafes, restaurants, and retail shops to taxi services, hotels, and travel agencies, emphasizing the creation of local jobs for local people.

Economic Multiplier Effect: Echoing findings from the Australian Trade and Investment Commission's June 2021 report, "Opportunities for the Visitor Economy," this initiative underlines tourism's powerful economic multiplier effect. For every dollar earned from tourism, 82 cents are generated in other parts of the economy, showcasing the enormous opportunity that tourism can play in supporting the region's economic evolution.

Comprehensive Benefits: The business case anticipates a range of benefits for the Hunter Region, including:

- Local jobs for local people with Increased visitation and spending, enhancing economic flow throughout the region.
- A boost in mid-week bookings, contributing to a more stable and consistent tourism market.
- Attraction of external investment, driving further development and growth.
- Improved lifestyle for residents through enhanced local facilities and services.
- Improved regional accessibility, making the Hunter more connected and easier to explore for both visitors and locals.



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The investment required to implement the Tourism Strategy is \$3.85m over three years and is expected to increase international visitation by at least 1%, providing an additional \$268m flowing through the Hunter region over three years once funded.

The partnership between the Hunter Joint Organisation, Newcastle Airport and Destination Sydney Surrounds North signifies a forward-thinking approach to regional development, with the execution of the business case set to begin as soon as funding is secured. As the Hunter Region prepares to welcome an influx of international tourists, the future looks bright, promising a stronger economy, more jobs, and an improved quality of life for its residents.

For more information about the initiative or to access the Tourism Strategy, please visit www.hunterjo.com.au/projects/hunter-global-tourism

Video:

<https://youtu.be/c85fdoscVpA>

Contact details:

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About the Hunter JO:

The Hunter Joint Organisation is a collaborative body that brings together the ten councils in the region to provide a united and local voice for our communities. As the hub for local intergovernmental collaboration, our statutory mandate includes identifying key regional strategic priorities, advocating for these priorities, and building collaborations around these priorities with other levels of government, industry and community. Find out more at www.hunterjo.com.au

Partner Information/Logos/Acknowledgements

The Business Case and Tourism Strategy was funded by the NSW Government.