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**MEDIA RELEASE:**  
**Destination Sydney Surrounds North**  
**First 12 Months**

Destination Sydney Surrounds North (DSSN) is one of six Destination Networks established in New South Wales as a result of the NSW Government's review of Regional Tourism Organisations in 2016. The Destination Network comprises 13 Local Government Areas (LGAs) covering Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Penrith, Central Coast, Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Maitland, Dungog Shire, Upper Hunter Shire, Muswellbrook Shire, Singleton and Cessnock.

Highlighting its significance to NSW Tourism results, the region attracted 19.6 million visitors generating \$4.2 billion in 2017.

A key objective for Destination Sydney Surrounds North is to further galvanise and support tourism and hospitality industry initiatives, encouraging community wide appreciation of the economic benefit, infrastructure enhancements and job opportunities they generate. Working in close step with each of the local councils is a major component of the initiative.

Since incorporation in 2017, DSSN has secured successful funding from the State Government and Destination partners for Cooperative Marketing, Product Development, Conferencing and Events, totalling \$2.5 million, in the process making a significant contribution towards the State Government's goal of doubling overnight visitor expenditure by the year 2020.

Projects funded in region have included consumer awareness campaigns for the Hunter Valley, Blue Mountains, Penrith and Hawkesbury. DSSN support has also enabled the development of products and experiences including "Coast XP" Newcastle, "Treetops Adventures" on the Central Coast and "Bannisters" Port Stephens. Additional DSSN support has underpinned the ongoing success of 13 Regional Events/Festivals and 9 Business Events, and the development of marketing campaigns, experiences and regional media coverage for DSSN partners, including 12 media familiarisations targeting the Chinese, US, Asian, New Zealand and British markets.

Throughout the process DSSN has coordinated industry forums, working groups and projects across Government boundaries allowing the LGAs to partner and collaborate to boost the visitor economy to region, resulting in the DSSN Destination Management Plan 2018 showcasing opportunities and challenges for the industry. DSSN is currently working with Destination NSW developing the state-wide Destination Management Plan and will continue to play a vital role in the Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan.

A further significant initiative driving visitation is Destination NSW's brand new online [Road Trip Planner](#). The easy to use interactive map delivers town-by-town directions & interesting insights along the way, combining images, video and helpful advice. Themed to offer something for every traveller, the drives feature food and wine, natural wonders, beaches and adventure, heritage and culture. For ease of application on the move, the planner is also available in mobile friendly format.

According to David Fellows, Chair of Destination Sydney Surrounds North, "One of the key focusses for the Destination Network is to work closely with industry partners to identify new opportunities for the region and to facilitate the resources to enable the implementation of strategies around them. Continuing to encourage greater awareness of the diverse consumer appeal our region offers, both domestically and internationally, remains a key focus as does the need to ensure that service delivery standards meet the increasingly sophisticated and culturally diverse requirements of visitors to our region. The job at hand is to continue to build results in line with NSW Government objectives. The introduction of international air services linking Newcastle with Auckland and the Road Trip Planner are two major steps in that direction".

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