

HOST DESTINATION PARTNER:

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# DESTINATION & VISITOR ECONOMY CONFERENCE 2021

26-28 May  
Sails Port Macquarie by Rydges,  
20 Park St, Port Macquarie





# Welcome to the Destination and Visitor Economy Conference. This year, we are proud to deliver a program focusing on creating destinations for living, learning, visiting and investing.



Based on your feedback, we have rebranded our conference and created a program that will bring you an engaging and educational experience. Our aim is to help you stay current on issues affecting councils in the visitor economy and inspire you with new opportunities you can implement in your local government areas.

Over the three days you will have the opportunity to participate in interactive breakout sessions of interest to metropolitan and regional councils, site visits, and plenary presentations that will provide expert insight into initiatives from around the world that are changing how we are catering to our future visitor.

You will also have exclusive networking opportunities with key sponsors, suppliers, peers, and other leaders in the destination marketing/management and visitor economy space.

## A glimpse of what to expect in Port Macquarie

On the Mid North Coast of NSW, Port Macquarie is famed for its pristine beaches, boutique CBD, lush hinterland and a variety of attractions including incredible wildlife encounters.

Port Macquarie has long charmed the leisure traveller; today a visitor will find a welcoming community, vibrant culture, arts and food scene, stunning coastal and country beauty. Adding to this is major capital investment, re-vamped hotels, foreshore and coastal walk upgrades, a new university campus and new airport terminal.

It's hard to believe it was only 18 months ago that the bushfires tore through this beautiful part of the world. The busy tourism season dried up, and then COVID-19 hit. Luckily, Port Macquarie's infrastructure and tourism attractions were spared and the town is now back to its lush and sparkling self ... next step is to attract the visitors.

A scenic four-hour drive from Sydney, Port Macquarie is the perfect location for your conference experience and your next weekend getaway.

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# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Three breakout streams packed full of expert insights on future directions in economic development, visitor servicing, and arts and activations



How to stay ahead of the curve in digital marketing and e-commerce for your destination: an interactive workshop by Threesides Marketing



Tourism skills and labour shortages session – the role of local government



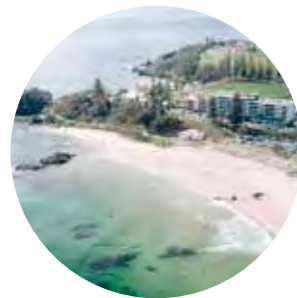
Catering to the future visitor, a keynote presentation with Q&A



New national research: local government spend on tourism



Choice of four site visits to learn about some of Port Macquarie's attractions, including the Koala Hospital, Bago Maze and Winery, and the new health and education precinct



Experience the warm and welcoming hospitality of Port Macquarie-Hastings Council.



Address from Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney and Shadow Minister for Investment and Tourism.

# SITE VISITS



**Thursday 27 May: 1.45pm – 5pm. Buses depart from Sails Port Macquarie by Rydges for a short trip to each site visit. All site visits include afternoon tea.**

## SITE VISIT 1:

### **Koala Hospital and Sea Acres tour– Leveraging our Natural Assets**

Learn from Koala Hospital President Sue Ashton about the impacts of the bushfires and managing the huge worldwide interest over this time. Also tour the Sea Acres Rainforest Centre, including a trip on the elevated board walk through the trees.

#### **Take away learnings:**

- How to weave unique nature experiences into the tourism experience to inspire visitors.
- How local government can support tourism operators during times of crisis and change.

## SITE VISIT 2:

### **Bago Maze and Winery – Not just another winery!**

Bago Maze and Winery has well and truly put itself on the map over recent years by offering one of the world's largest hedge mazes, a traditional "Russian Caravan" themed chocolate shop, and a range of other delights.

This adventure is a 35-minute bus ride from Sails, so be prepared to settle back and relax.

#### **Take away learnings:**

- Differentiating the winery product - challenges and advantages.
- How diversifying has helped Bago bounce back from bushfires/coronavirus and take advantage of strong domestic visitation.
- Bago's first-hand experience of the NSW First Operator program with support from DNSW and Port Macquarie Hastings Council.

## SITE VISIT 3:

### **Charles Sturt University – Economic Development: New Health and Education Precinct**

Visit one of Australia's fastest growing regional universities to discuss Health and Education Precinct Planning. Tour a section of the new, \$66 million, state-of-the-art CSU Port Macquarie campus, followed by a visit to the surrounding planned industrial area and the Wicked Elf brewery for a taste.

#### **Take away learnings:**

- How Port Macquarie Hastings Council helped drive the development of a health and education precinct.
- Addressing land use planning issues to capture the benefits and address the challenges of a growing regional university.
- How student accommodation and other university facilities were used during the bushfire response.

## SITE VISIT 4:

### **Ricardoes and Billabong Zoo – Instagrammable attractions**

Visit Ricardoes Tomatoes and Strawberries and experience the inner workings of an intensive agricultural facility that is open to the public for strawberry picking, farm tours and Café Red. The café offers what has been labelled in one viral article "the best scones in the world". A short drive from Ricardoes is Billabong Zoo. See more than 80 species of mammals, reptiles and birds and learn how the zoo competes with the likes of Taronga Zoo Sydney.

#### **Take away learnings:**

- The significant economic value that can be extracted beyond the farm gate for businesses.
- How Instagram (and being "Instagrammable") has been critical to the success of these businesses.
- How this family-owned zoo survived during the Bushfires and COVID, and then thrived by using clever social media strategies and by appealing to local supporters.





# NETWORKING

Conference social events will have an informal and relaxed atmosphere, allowing delegates to unwind while catching up with peers and making new connections.

## WELCOME RECEPTION

**Wednesday 26 May 5pm – 7pm**  
**Sails Port Macquarie by Rydges**

The event will begin with an official welcome to the Port Macquarie Hastings region, after which delegates can relax and settle in while enjoying food and beverages within the trade booth area, providing an opportunity to speak with our sponsors. Entertainment provided by local theatre group Banjo and local musician Chris Rose.

## EARLY MORNING GROUP HARBOUR WELLBEING WALK

**Thursday 27 May 6.15am**  
**Meet in the foyer of Sails Port Macquarie by Rydges**

Start the day with a guided walk around the boardwalk into the Town Green. Approximately 4km return, total time one hour. Guided by Michelle Aubert, LGNSW - a north coast resident.

## NETWORKING WITH LIGHT SNACKS / TRADE EXHIBITION OPENS

**Thursday 27 May from 8.15am and**  
**Friday 28 May from 8.15am**  
**Sails Port Macquarie by Rydges**

Meet in the trade exhibition area each morning for your morning coffee and breakfast snacks and get ready for a day of conferencing.

## PRE-DINNER DRINKS / TRADE EXHIBITION OPENS

**Thursday 27 May 6pm**  
**Sails Port Macquarie by Rydges**

Share stories with other delegates about the site visit tours. Explore all of our trade exhibition and personally meet with our key sponsors and exhibitors while enjoying a beverage before the conference dinner.

## CONFERENCE DINNER: Embracing the Arts!

**Thursday 27 May 6.30pm.**  
**Transfers depart from Sails 6.30pm**  
**for 6.45pm – 10pm**  
**Cassegrain Wines**

With an outstanding reputation, world-class cuisine, award-winning wines and a picturesque setting at Cassegrain - be ready for a lively welcome. Enjoy time with your colleagues listening to a mix of live and local music throughout the evening.

**Check the LGNSW website for updated news on the conference social program**

## THE CONFERENCE AND VENUE ACCOMMODATION

You will be welcomed by a relaxed coastal vibe with fresh salty air at the main conference venue, Sails Port Macquarie by Rydges. Enjoy the great outdoors, picturesque beaches and endless waterways. Port Macquarie is surrounded by the Hastings River on one side and stunning beaches on the other.

LGNSW has secured discounted room rates at Sails Port Macquarie by Rydges. Our conference website lists additional **suggested accommodation**.

Port Macquarie has a great deal of accommodation within walking distance of the main venue. Due to this, daily transfers will not be provided. Please make your conference travel and accommodation arrangements by booking directly with providers.



## GETTING TO PORT MACQUARIE

### By air:

If you have registered to attend the optional marketing workshop at 1.30pm on Wednesday, please ensure you book the flight that allows you to arrive in time to attend.

Qantas and Rex flights around the conference dates and program (NB: Flights are subject to change):

Date	Flight No.	From/To	Dept/Arr
<b>QANTAS</b>			
Wednesday 26 May 2021	QF2160	Sydney/Port Mac	08:40/ 09:40
	QF2162	Sydney/Port Mac	10:40 /11:40
	QF2164	Sydney/Port Mac	15.10 /16:10
Friday 28 May 2021	QF2167	Port Mac/Sydney	15:30/ 16:35
	QF2165	Port Mac/Sydney	16:35/17:40
<b>REX Airlines</b>			
Wednesday 26 May 2021	ZL6362	Sydney/Port Mac	09:10/10:15
	ZL6374	Sydney/Port Mac	15:40/ 16:45
	ZL6386	Sydney/Port Mac	18:55/ 20:00
Friday 28 May 2021	ZL6375	Port Mac/Sydney	17:10/18:15

### By car:

Port Macquarie is halfway between Sydney and Byron Bay, on the Mid North Coast of New South Wales, and can be reached by road, air or rail.

Recent upgrades to the highway now make it an easy four-hour drive from Sydney's northern suburbs, and less than three hours from Newcastle. From western New South Wales, the Oxley Highway provides access from the New England Highway, Armidale and Tamworth, in less than four hours.



# REGISTRATION OPTIONS

Online Registration opens Wednesday, 10 March 2021.

Book before Thursday 1 April 2021 to access reduced early bird rates.

REGISTRATION FEES	Fee (incl. GST) LGNSW members	Fee (incl. GST) Non-Council members
Workshop	\$139	\$279
Workshop with welcome reception	\$220	\$440
Early bird conference registration <b>incl workshop</b>	\$850	\$1680
Early bird conference registration <b>exc workshop</b> (by Thursday 1 April 2021)	\$715	\$1405
Conference registration standard <b>incl workshop</b>	\$969	\$1950
Conference registration standard <b>exc workshop</b> (by Friday 14 May 2021)	\$830	\$1635
Thursday registration - day only (inclusive site visits)	\$425	\$830
Friday registration - day only	\$289	\$579
Welcome reception - extra tickets	\$95	\$185
Conference dinner - extra tickets if available	\$169	\$335

**\* Please note: early bird and standard conference registration tickets include welcome reception and conference dinner**

Cancellations before Friday, 14 May will receive a refund (less \$220 administration fee). Cancellations made after 5pm on this date are not refundable, however, registration can be transferred to another person.



## SPONSORSHIP

If you are interested in sponsoring or supporting the conference, please email [sponsorship@lgnsw.org.au](mailto:sponsorship@lgnsw.org.au) or call Michelle Aubert on 0408 791 492. LGNSW is committed to **environmental sustainability at events and conferences.**