



Adam Marshall
Minister for Tourism and Major Events
Assistant Minister for Skills

MEDIA RELEASE

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UNLOCKING NSW'S MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR BACKYARD

A major new strategy to boost rural and regional economies and capitalise on the fast growing popularity of nature-based tourism will be developed by the NSW Government.

The NSW Government will develop a Nature-based Tourism Strategy by December 2018 and has reserved \$28 million of the Regional Growth Environment Tourism Fund for nature-based environment and tourism infrastructure projects.

Minister for Tourism and Major Events Adam Marshall said the initiatives were a key plank of the NSW Government's strategy to attract additional visitors to the State, and then encourage greater dispersal into rural and regional areas.

"From scuba diving to bushwalking, nature-based tourism is exploding in popularity all over the world, but there's much untapped potential with our high-yield international tourists," Mr Marshall said.

"We know that an increasing number of international tourists from places like China, India and Germany are looking for a unique and scenic experience away from the crowded skylines of Shanghai, Mumbai and Berlin.

"What better place to find that than our State's world class natural icons – from the Back O' Bourke to the beaches of Byron Bay.

"And to kick start our commitment, we've reserved \$28 million for new or improved nature-based environment and tourism infrastructure projects to make sure tourists have a world class visitor experience here in NSW.

"International tourists stay six times longer on average than domestic visitors and spend about four times more, so the new strategy will focus on developing the experience for overseas visitors.

"Last year, tourists to our great outdoors stayed around 130 million nights and spent \$19 billion in NSW. It's big business for the State, and everyone reaps the benefits.

"It's about filling our hotels, motels, cafes, restaurants and businesses, and it's about boosting our local economies and ensuring our towns continue to thrive.

"This Strategy will identify NSW's competitive advantage, so that when International tourists visit down under, they're flying into Sydney and out into our rural and regional areas."

MEDIA: Georgie Humphries 0418 495 502