

Destination NSW
88 Cumberland Street, Sydney
NSW 2000

Chad Watson
Editor, Newcastle Herald
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Friday 12 June 2015

Dear Editor,

The claims made by the Hunter Regional Tourism Organisation (Tourism Hunter), which appeared in Sam Rigney's article on Friday 12 June, ('State 'missing' in tourism') are incorrect.

Approximately \$1.6 million has been on the table for the last two years for Tourism Hunter to access in matched dollar-for-dollar funding available for The Hunter Region under the NSW Government's Regional Visitor Economy Fund (RVEF). Over the last two financial years Tourism Hunter has only applied for 10.9 per cent of this available funding.

Tourism Hunter has been unable to secure the support of the industry in order to gather funds to match those available from the NSW Government, to support campaigns, develop a business plan and marketing activities, and to appoint staff to coordinate their strategic and operational responsibilities.

Over the past two years Destination NSW has undertaken a number of activities at its own expense to assist the Region, including providing a consultant to review The Hunter's regional tourism structure and provide recommendations about how it might be better served.

Despite Tourism Hunter's lack of action to access the funds available to them, Destination NSW has consistently promoted The Hunter Region as one of the State's major tourism destinations both domestically and internationally, and is dedicated to seeing tourism prosper in this important part of the State's visitor economy. We have undertaken several cooperative marketing campaigns with other tourism groups including Port Stephens, Newcastle and the Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association, and invested in many major events and Regional Flagship Events in the Region.

In addition, Destination NSW, not Tourism Hunter, developed a proposal to the NSW Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events for the recently announced \$1 million in funding to assist the Region to recover following the recent storms.

I also met with hotels and accommodation providers in The Hunter on Friday to help develop a way forward for tourism in the Region. As the State's tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW remains focused on growing tourism across NSW and we are always willing to work with any group or groups that have as their objective the promotion of Newcastle and The Hunter.

Yours faithfully,

Sandra Chipchase
Chief Executive Officer
Destination NSW