



The Hon Niall Blair MLC
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Regional Water
Minister for Trade and Industry

BN17/7069

The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP
Minister for the Environment and Energy
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I write on behalf of the NSW Government to seek a national interest exemption in accordance with section 158 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act) from sections 18, 18A, 20, 20A, 23 and 24A of Part 3, and Part 7 through to Part 9 of Chapter 4 of this Act to allow for further north coast shark mesh net trials during the period of 1 November 2017 to 31 October 2019 inclusive. Whilst the NSW Government is seeking an exemption until 2019, the Government at this stage has committed to funding one shark meshing trail over the 2017/2018 swimming season.

The NSW Government recognises that further trials will impact on some matters of national environmental significance, namely threatened and protected species and migratory species. Further trials would be undertaken in accordance with the enclosed 'operational requirements' reflected in any 'approved management plans' under Schedule 6D of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (NSW).

National interest considerations

Trials will inform national shark management measures

The first trials of mesh nets on the north coast were conducted from 17 November 2016 to 16 November 2017, and were the subject of a national interest exemption issued by you under the EPBC Act, dated 16 November 2016.

The review recommendations from the first trial have identified a number of modifications that can be made to mesh net design and operations that may assist in reducing by-catch of non-target species, in particular threatened and migratory species. It is intended to implement these recommendations using a robust scientific design during further trials.

Larger mesh net sizes and stronger mesh net materials are proposed to be used to target large White, Tiger and Bull Sharks, while minimising the risk of entanglement of smaller non-target species. Alternative approaches to the depth at which the mesh nets are set in the water column will also be trialled to maximise the survival of air-breathing marine fauna, particularly turtles and cetaceans. The frequency of net checks will remain under review to minimise rates of by-catch.

The testing of up to 30 SMART drumlines in the same beach locations as the mesh nets is also planned during further trials. The research objective is to assess the catch of target sharks and by-catch of the nets against SMART drumlines used in the area of the trial.

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The results from the first trial showed promising results for SMART drumlines with four times the catch of target sharks (36) compared to the mesh nets (9), and 97 percent survival of all species caught. Further trials are needed to ensure that this was not a one-off result.

Under the NSW Shark Management Strategy and supporting legislation (Schedule 6D of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (NSW)), the NSW Government has an important window of opportunity to trial and test new and emerging shark management measures with the funding that is available until 2020. The research outcomes will have broader jurisdictional application and will inform the design and use of mesh nets in Queensland and other areas of NSW, and in other states where mesh nets may be considered. The trials will also help inform the public acceptance of established and new technologies for mitigating shark-human interactions nation-wide.

Western Australia and Queensland have already shown genuine and collaborative interest in the findings of these world first trials of the use of mesh nets alongside SMART drumlines to inform their own shark management measures. The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has initiated collaborative, knowledge-sharing teleconferences with their counterparts in Western Australia. CSIRO are also working closely with DPI to incorporate biological information about White Sharks obtained in the trial into population models which will ultimately better inform the design and use of shark management measures.

It should also be noted that by-catch species from the nets are retained for scientific research purposes. As a result, a number of national research projects collect data and biological material that would otherwise be difficult to source. This includes information on feeding, breeding condition, genetics and movement patterns for a number of threatened and protected species.

Increased levels of unprovoked shark interactions on the NSW north coast and continuing risk to beach goers

Further trials of mesh nets are required in the same location as the first trial (i.e. beaches in the Ballina Shire and Richmond Valley Council Local Government Areas) due to the continuing real threat from shark interactions to human life.

Since 1 January 2014 there have been 49 interactions between sharks and humans in NSW waters. Of these interactions, 32 were unprovoked, with three resulting in fatalities (one surfer and two ocean swimmers); the most recent of which occurred in February 2015 at Ballina on the NSW north coast. Of the remaining 29 unprovoked interactions, seven resulted in serious injuries, 14 in minor injuries, and eight with no injuries.

The White Shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*) was identified as, or likely to have been, responsible for 17 of the 32 unprovoked interactions, including the three fatalities and five of the serious injuries. The Bull Shark (*Carcharhinus leucas*) was responsible for two other serious injuries.

Of the 32 unprovoked shark interactions, 15 occurred on the north coast, five on the mid north coast, four in the Hunter, two on the Central Coast, one in Sydney, two on the Illawarra, and three on the south coast. Four of the more recent minor injuries occurred to surfers from White Sharks on the north coast (26 September 2016 at Lighthouse Beach, 12 October at Sharpes Beach, Ballina, 24 October 2016 at Suffolk Park, near Byron Bay and 16 September 2017 at Iluka).

In total, 14 unprovoked interactions have occurred on the north coast since 1 January 2015; all to surfers. Of these, nine involved White Sharks and two involved Bull Sharks. Records of shark-human interactions are kept by NSW DPI, the Australian Shark Attack Files and the Global Shark Attack Files.

Data from the use of between 25 and 35 SMART drumlines over the past nine months (Dec 2016 – Aug 2017) show a total of 94 target sharks (88 White Sharks, 3 Tiger Sharks, and 3 Bull Sharks) have been intercepted just beyond the surf break in the trial area. Catches of target sharks have occurred in all months during this period in the trial area. The data highlights the fact that target White, Tiger and Bull Sharks continue to pose a significant ongoing risk to beach users on the north coast.

National economic impacts

The significant ongoing risk of shark interactions on the NSW north coast is of national economic interest as the area is a major national and international recreation and tourism destination, and a gateway to the Gold Coast, Queensland and other regional locations. A primary driver of recreation and tourism in this region of Australia are the iconic surf beaches, offering various on-water recreation activities, tourism, and sporting opportunities (e.g. swimming, surfing, surf schools, kayaking and kite surfing). The area also hosts major tourism events such as the Skullcandy Oz Grom Open international surfing event which attracts over 170 surfers from over 10 countries annually and brings in thousands of tourists and spectators to the region.

The NSW north coast makes a significant contribution to the national economy attracting over 20 million domestic overnight visitors and 3.5 million international overnight visitors for the period of April 2016 to March 2017. More than 53% of domestic visitors and 82% of international visitors are holiday makers. International and domestic visitors to the north coast spent \$3.5 billion in the year ending March 2017. The local tourism industry is also important to the local communities as it supports approximately one in three jobs in the region. See <https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/North-Coast-NSW-Snapshot-YE-Mar-17.pdf>.

The intense media interest nationally and regionally on the north coast shark-human interactions since early 2015 is testament to the community's ongoing concern for public safety at Australia's surf beaches and flow-on impacts to the community and the economy. The major holiday and tourism season for this region occurs from December through to April, when mesh nets will be trialled. Shark-human interactions impact on Australia's reputation as an international tourism destination, with flow-on impacts to the regional and national economies, including jobs and growth.

Community support for the trials

The NSW Government sought the views of the NSW community pre and towards the end of the first trial. The significance of this issue to the NSW north coast community is reflected in the findings from community consultation during 28 October to 6 November 2016. Over 4,000 people responded to an online survey and over 1,000 people visited information stands within the trial area during this two week period. A further 600 people on the North Coast were randomly surveyed via telephone during this period. In summary:

- the telephone survey of 600 Ballina Shire Council and Evans Head residents showed strong support for the mesh net trial, with 54% feeling the trial would be positive for the community against 12% feeling the trial would be negative. Among local surfers support

was even stronger, with 62% cent feeling the trials would be positive against just 9% seeing them as negative.

- the surveys towards the end of the trial found that telephone respondents were still more positive than negative towards the nets when considering themselves (32% positive vs 27% negative), their families (32% positive vs 21% negative) and the wider community (36% positive vs 26% negative). Respondents indicated that nets provided them with a sense of being safe in the water and that there had been a perceived decrease in shark-human interactions.

There are currently no shark mesh nets in place on the NSW north coast, having been removed on 30 May 2017 to avoid the peak northward whale migration season.

Public safety is a responsibility of all governments. Unprovoked shark-human interactions are not specific to NSW and are considered a national issue where State and Commonwealth Governments need to work cooperatively to ensure the protection of swimmers and surfers.

The Department of Primary Industries will keep you informed of progress on the finalisation of the NSW approvals process for further trials and the associated timeframes for their implementation. If you have any further inquiries, please contact Dr Geoff Allan, Deputy Director General, DPI Fisheries, on (02) 4916 3909 or 0419 185 510.

Yours sincerely



04 OCT 2017

**The Hon Niall Blair MLC
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Regional Water
Minister for Trade and Industry**

Encl.

Operational requirements for any further NSW north coast shark mesh net trials (September 2017)

DEFINITIONS

In these operational requirements:

“Animal” means any animal-life (other than human), whether vertebrate or invertebrate and in any stage of biological development, and includes a dead animal.

“Contract” means a contract for the provision of services by a third party to implement the requirements.

“Contractor” means the contractor who undertakes to provide the services required by the contract and, where the contractor is an individual or a partnership, the expression shall include the personal representatives of that individual or of the partners as the case may be and the expression shall also include any person to whom the benefit of the contract may be assigned by the contractor with the consent of DPI.

“CPUE” means catch per unit of effort.

“Department” means the NSW Department of Industry.

“DPI” means the NSW Department of Primary Industries, a division of the Department.

“Fauna” has the same meaning as animal.

“Fish” has the same meaning as in section 5 of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (NSW).

“FM Act” means the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (NSW).

“Inspection” means setting, checking and/or retrieving a net or other shark management measure.

“Listed fauna” means any marine birds, marine mammals, marine reptiles, Matters of National Environmental Significance, Protected Fauna, Protected Fish or Threatened Species as defined herein (see also Appendix 1).

“Marine birds” means animals of the orders of Procellariiformes, Pelecaniformes and Falconiformes, and animals of the family Laridae and Stercorariidae.

“Marine mammals” means all animals of the orders of Cetacea, Sirenia and Pinnipedia.

“Marine reptiles” means animals of the family Cheloniidae and Dermochelyidae.

“Matters of National Environmental Significance” has the same meaning as in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

“Observer” means an employee of DPI or a person engaged by DPI to carry out the Observer Program.

“Observer Program” means the program where observers monitor the trial of nets.

“OEH” means the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

“Protected fauna” has the same meaning as in the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NSW).

“Protected fish” has the same meaning as in the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (NSW) and includes the species of fish listed in Part 1 of the Tables in clause 5 and Part 1 of the Tables in clause 6 of the Fisheries Management (General) Regulation 2010.

“Shark Scientist” means an employee of DPI or a person engaged by DPI to oversee the technical and research activities of the contractors and the trial.

“Shark Strategy Supervisor” means an employee of DPI or a person engaged by DPI to oversee the management of the contract and contractors.

“SMART drumline” refers to the scientific instrument developed at Reunion Island which comprises a traditional drumline and baited hook, a MLI-S GPS satellite buoy, and the Catch-A-Live TM system. The Catch-A-Live system includes a trigger between the hook and the MLI-S buoy. When something takes the bait, the trigger is switched on and a message is transmitted to a satellite and then to mobile devices to notify the fisher of the catch.

“Meshing operations” means the placing of the nets at coastal beaches or other tidal waters in the area of operation of the trial.

“Swimmers” as defined under Schedule 6D of the NSW *Fisheries Management Act 1994*.

“Target sharks” means White Shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*), Tiger Shark (*Galeocerdo cuvier*), and Bull Shark (*Carcharhinus leucas*)

“the trial” means a trial approved by the Minister for Primary Industries under Schedule 6D of the NSW *Fisheries Management Act 1994* in accordance with these operational requirements.

“Threatened species” has the same meaning as in the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (NSW), the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW) and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth), and also includes Population/s and Ecological Community/ies as defined in those Acts.

INTRODUCTION

NSW DPI proposes to conduct further shark-meshing trials on the NSW north coast from 1 November 2017 in accordance with Schedule 6D to the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (NSW) (FM Act).

The purpose of the meshing trials is to inform continuous improvement in methods to reduce the risk to swimmers from shark interactions and complement the NSW Shark Management Strategy, which includes trials of emerging technologies.

The particular objects of Schedule 6D to the FM Act, in relation to the shark management trials, are to:

- a) reduce the risk to swimmers posed by sharks;
- b) minimise the impact of shark-management measures on fauna; and
- c) inform future shark-management decisions.

This document sets out the specifications and provisions that will be codified in any approved management plan(s) prepared and adopted for each trial.

The approved management plan for a trial is to specify:

- a) the area in which the trial is to be conducted;
- b) the shark management measures to be used under the trial; and
- c) the time period of the trial.

The approved management plan may also make provision for or with respect to the following:

- a) monitoring and reporting requirements;
- b) performance indicators and measures to monitor and assess whether the objectives of the trial are achieved;
- c) risk mitigation and management strategies in relation to the trial, including in relation to (i) public safety, (ii) environmental impacts, (iii) emergencies that may arise in connection with the trial;
- d) requirements relating to the use of shark-management measures (including contractor requirements);
- e) an observer program for the trial; and
- f) any other matters relating to the trial.

TRIAL SPECIFICATIONS

1 Area of operation

1.1. The area in which the trial is to be conducted is at coastal beaches and other tidal waters on the NSW north coast within the boundaries of Richmond Valley Council and Ballina Shire Council Local Government Areas.

2 Shark management measure to be used

2.1. Up to ten nets will be used in the trial area over the approved trial period. All ten nets may be used at any one time.

2.2. The nets used under the trials will be anchored, semi-pelagic synthetic filament mesh nets, up to 150 m in length.

2.3. In accordance with recommendations arising from the NSW North Coast Shark Mesh Net Trial in 2016-17, alternative net materials and/or mesh sizes and/or retroactively fitted physical devices may be trialled to reduce bycatch and the collateral mortality of bycatch, including but not limited to:

- a. Mesh sizes of 60 to 90 cm
- b. Changes to vertical fishing height Polyamide twine.

- 2.4. The nets will be set in a generally parallel direction off the coastal beach or other tidal waters, about 500 m off the shore, with a weighted bottom line (leadline) and a floated top line (floatline).
- 2.5. Alternative spatial deployments may be trialled to reduce bycatch and the collateral mortality of bycatch.
- 2.6. The nets must be identified by surface floats.
- 2.7. Nets are the shark-management measure to be used in these trials, relevant to this exemption.
- 2.8. SMART drumlines may be deployed in the trial area, however they are not a shark management measure for the purposes of these trials.

3 Time period

- 3.1. The period in which to conduct trials is limited to 24 months from 1 November 2017 to 31 October 2019.

4 Monitoring and reporting

- 4.1. Data on catches of fauna will be recorded by an observer or contractor during every net inspection and provisional data will be reported by NSW DPI at least monthly on the NSW DPI website.
- 4.2. Observers or contractors will identify and record fauna taken in net catches (noting decomposition may preclude some identifications) (cross-referencing with NSW DPI or OEH identification manuals) in accordance with the NSW DPI catch data record sheets (Appendix 2).
- 4.3. Reports will summarise the date, net location and times when the nets were deployed per week and the date and times when the nets were inspected and include the total number of individuals and type of fauna species captured and their status at the time of the inspection.
- 4.4. An analysis of the full set of trial results, its outcomes in achieving the objectives of the trial, and any recommendations arising from that analysis will be made available in the final report prepared by NSW DPI within four months of the end of the trial and published on the NSW DPI website.
- 4.5. In relation to EPBC-listed threatened and migratory species, the final report will identify:
 - a) the species (where possible) that have been caught in the nets;
 - b) any notable variations in the catch and/or mortality of a species compared to previous trials in the trial area;
 - c) proposed new devices or procedures to mitigate impacts to species that have been more frequently reported in the nets (e.g. turtles and rays);
and

- d) proposed new devices or procedures to mitigate impacts to any critically endangered species that have been impacted.

4.6. The level of community acceptance and demand for the presence and operation of the nets during the trial will be assessed after the trial and reported via the community engagement program under the NSW Shark Management Strategy and via the final report.

5 Performance indicators

5.1. The trials aim to reduce the risk of unprovoked interactions with target (White, Tiger and Bull) sharks within the area of the trial.

5.2. The objectives of the trials relevant to the national interest and to inform future decision-making about shark management include:

- a. Compare the catches of target sharks and bycatch of the nets against SMART drumlines used in the area of the trial.
- b. Minimise the impact of the trial on all fauna;

5.3. The indicators used to measure the effectiveness of the nets at catching target sharks while minimising the impacts on fauna compared to SMART drumlines will include:

- a. CPUE of individual target sharks caught per net versus per SMART drumline.
- b. Percentage of target sharks from total number of animals caught in all nets versus all SMART drumlines.
- c. Percentage total survival of species caught in nets versus on SMART drumlines.

5.4. The indicators used to measure the impact on fauna and success in minimising the impact of the trial on fauna will include:

- a. Catch numbers and mortalities for each species.
- b. Catches or mortalities for species and/or fauna groups compared to previous meshing trials.

6 Environmental and social risk mitigation

6.1. All nets must be fitted with acoustic warning devices (dolphin pingers and whale alarms). Contractors must check the devices at every physical net inspection. Any non-functioning devices must be replaced immediately.

6.2. The nets may be fitted with other technology devices (e.g. GPS, data loggers, or acoustic listening devices) as specified by the shark scientist or observer.

6.3. Where safe and practical to do so, tag live target sharks (except Grey Nurse Sharks) and turtles prior to release using the tags and tagging devices supplied by the shark scientist.

- 6.4. NSW DPI will continue research into methods of minimising the bycatch of fauna. This may involve using technology and tagging to improve detection and/or response procedures.
- 6.5. All live fauna will be identified and released with the least possible harm, and in accordance with any relevant national or state disentanglement guidelines. Animals may be retained for rehabilitation before release if required.
- 6.6. The Fauna Disentanglement Plan will be reviewed and updated accordingly as a supporting document to each approved management plan and be made publicly available on the NSW DPI website.
- 6.7. Deceased animals, other than listed fauna, may be disposed of at sea beyond 5.5 km of the NSW coast. Carcasses must first be prepared in such a manner as to cause the carcass to sink.
- 6.8. Carcasses of deceased listed fauna may be retained by the contractor and delivered to a local place nominated by the shark scientist or observer.
- 6.9. NSW DPI will avoid the deployment of mesh nets during the peak whale migration, unless a shark-human interaction occurs in the trial area during this migration period.
- 6.10. During each inspection, the contractor must remove all catch and debris from the nets.
- 6.11. Nets must be inspected by the Contractor no less than 12 hours of the previous inspection and no later than 52 hours, weather and sea conditions permitting. Nets may be inspected by the Contractor within 24 hours of the previous inspection if a live animal is observed in the nets.
- 6.12. The mesh-net inspection frequency will be evaluated at the end of each trial and the inspection frequency will be adjusted where necessary to minimise absolute impacts to fauna.
- 6.13. Nets must be retrieved and removed from beaches by the contractor in the event of extreme weather or as otherwise required following written approval or advice from the NSW DPI shark scientist.
- 6.14. Nets must not be set by the contractor if extreme weather conditions are forecast and the contractor has written approval from the NSW DPI shark scientist.
- 6.15. Where the opportunity is available, NSW DPI will continue to assist and report on research into the impacts of shark-control programs on MNES including, for example, monitoring and quantifying the post-release mortality to live-caught turtles and sharks.
- 6.16. The list of marine fauna at Appendix 1 of the approved management plan for the trial will highlight the species that have been caught during previous meshing programs in Qld and NSW.

7 Requirements relating to the use of mesh nets

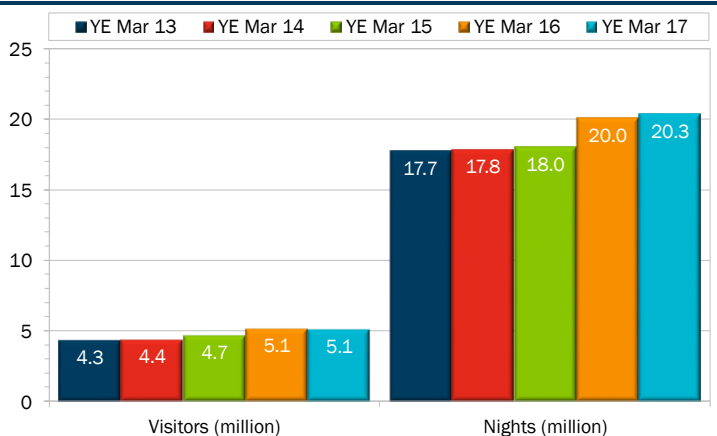
- 7.1. Netting activities will be undertaken by contractors. Contracts will be administered by NSW DPI.
- 7.2. All contractors engaged in the trial must be appropriately trained and experienced in all netting activities, including:
 - a. inspections (setting, checking and retrieving);
 - b. disentanglement (except for large marine mammals);
 - c. incident management under the Fauna Disentanglement Plan; and
 - d. catch recording.
- 7.3. NSW DPI will ensure that the requirements of the approved management plan are communicated to all contractors prior to the commencement of each trial period.
- 7.4. Contractors will be required to keep nets in good condition and repair as required to the satisfaction of the NSW DPI Shark Scientist. As a minimum, good condition means the nets are removed from the water, cleaned, checked and fully repaired and/or replaced with a clean net in good condition at least every 14 days.

8 Observer program

- 8.1. The purpose of the observer program is to act as a check on contractor's undertaking activities under contract in relation to the trial, specifically ensuring:
 - a. contractor compliance with contract conditions;
 - b. that the observed net inspections meet the requirements of the trial and contract;
 - c. quality in data and sample collection; and
 - d. quality in catch recording and reporting.
- 8.2. The observer program includes the following:
 - a. NSW DPI will provide an appropriately qualified and trained observer for net inspections during the trial.
 - b. The observer must attend at least 60% of net inspections on board the contractor's vessel or dinghy used to inspect the nets, or a NSW DPI vessel during the net inspection.
- 8.3. NSW DPI must take corrective actions if any non-compliances are identified.

Domestic Overnight Travel¹

Visitors and nights



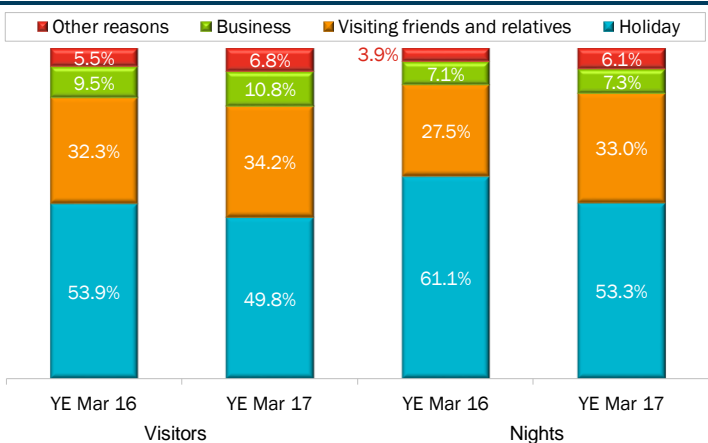
North Coast NSW received nearly 5.1 million domestic overnight visitors - down by 1.2% on YE Mar 16. Visitors spent over 20.3 million nights in the region - up by 1.6% on YE Mar 16.

Note: The number of domestic overnight trips to regional New South Wales increased by 2.3 percent on last year and by 15.7 percent* compared to four years ago.

Market share

The region received 24.5% of visitors and 28.9% of nights in regional NSW. Compared to YE Mar 16, the share of visitors was down by 0.9% pts and the share of nights was down by 0.8% pts.

Purpose of visit to North Coast NSW



'Holiday' (49.8%) was the largest purpose of visit for visitors to the region, followed by 'visiting friends and relatives (VFR)' (34.2%) and 'business' (10.8%). Compared to YE Mar 16, visitors who travelled for 'holiday' declined by 8.6%* while 'VFR' grew by 4.5% and 'business' increased by 11.9%.

'Holiday' (53.3%) was the largest purpose in terms of nights in the region, followed by 'VFR' (33.0%) and 'business' (7.3%). Compared to YE Mar 16, nights spent for 'holiday' declined by 11.4% while 'VFR' grew by 22.2%* and 'business' increased by 4.8%.

Accommodation in North Coast NSW

'Friends or relatives property' (33.3%) was the most popular accommodation used for nights in the region, followed by 'caravan park or commercial camping ground' (19.7%) and 'rented house, apartment, flat or unit' (13.6%).

North Coast NSW region covers Great Lakes to Tweed Heads including Forster, Taree, Wingham, Port Macquarie, South West Rocks, Macksville, Bellingen, Coffs Harbour, Grafton, Ballina, Lismore, Byron Bay and Murwillumbah.

* The percentage change is statistically significant.

Origin

Origin	Share of visitors		Share of nights	
	YE Mar 16	YE Mar 17	YE Mar 16	YE Mar 17
Regional NSW	36.3%	35.5%	34.0%	33.4%
Sydney	22.7%	24.5%	24.4%	25.8%
Total intrastate	59.0%	59.9%	58.4%	59.2%
Queensland	31.7%	30.8%	28.1%	25.7%
Victoria	5.7%	5.7%	7.2%	9.8%
ACT	1.3%	1.2%	1.4%	1.4%
Other interstate	2.4%	2.4%	4.9%	3.9%
Total interstate	41.0%	40.1%	41.6%	40.8%

Regional NSW (35.5%) was the largest source of visitors to the region, followed by Queensland (30.8%) and Sydney (24.5%). Compared to YE Mar 16, the regional NSW source market declined by 3.5% while Sydney grew by 6.4%. Over the same period, Queensland declined by 4.0% and Victoria decreased by 1.7% while the ACT fell by 4.4%.

Regional NSW (33.4%) was the largest source market in terms of nights in the region, followed by Sydney (25.8%) and Queensland (25.7%). Compared to YE Mar 16, nights spent by visitors from regional NSW declined by 0.5% while nights from Sydney grew by 7.7%. Over the same period, nights by Queenslanders declined by 7.2% while Victorian nights grew by 39.0%* and nights by visitors from the ACT increased by 3.1%.

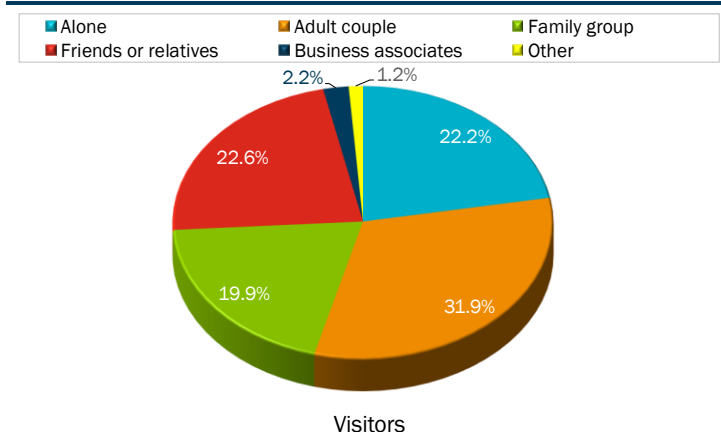
Top activities in North Coast NSW

'Eat out, dine at a restaurant or cafe' (65.0%) was the most popular activity undertaken by visitors to the region, followed by 'go to the beach' (49.4%) and 'visit friends and relatives' (44.3%).

Age groups

'15 to 29 years' (22.3%) was the largest age group of visitors to the region, followed by '50 to 59 years' (17.8%) and '60 to 69 years' (17.3%).

Travel party



'Adult couple' (31.9%) was the most common travel party amongst visitors to the region, followed by 'friends or relatives' (22.6%) and 'alone' (22.2%).

Expenditure (incl airfares and transport costs)³

Domestic overnight visitors spent nearly \$2.9 billion in the region - up by 2.6% on YE Mar 16. On average, they spent \$140 per night - up by 1.0% on YE Mar 16.

(3) Source: TRA's expenditure allocation method applied to NVS data, YE Mar 17.

Travel to North Coast NSW region

Year ended March 2017

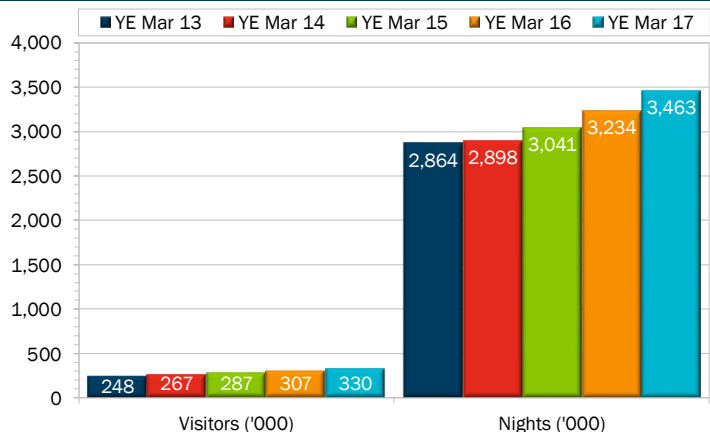
For the period of April 2016 to March 2017

Sources: (1) NVS & (2) IVS, YE Mar 17, TRA - unless otherwise specified.

	YE Mar 17	YE on YE growth	Share of region			Share of regional NSW	Rank in regional NSW
			international overnight	domestic overnight	domestic daytrips		
Total visitors (million)	11.9	-1.0%	2.8%	42.8%	54.4%	20.5%	1
Total nights (million)	23.8	2.3%	14.6%	85.4%	0.0%	28.1%	1
Total spend (billion)	\$3.7	0.5%	5.4%	78.0%	16.6%	24.6%	1

International Overnight Travel²

Visitors and nights



North Coast NSW received 330,100 international overnight visitors - up by 7.7%* on YE Mar 16. Visitors spent nearly 3.5 million nights in the region - up by 7.1% on YE Mar 16.

Note: The number of overnight trips to regional New South Wales by international visitors increased by 9.6 percent* on last year and by 34.3 percent* compared to four years ago.

Market share

The region received 42.3% of visitors and 24.4% of nights in regional NSW. Compared to YE Mar 16, the share of visitors was down by 0.7% pts and the share of nights was up by 0.9% pts.

Purpose of visit to North Coast NSW

'Holiday' (82.1%) was the largest purpose of visit for visitors to the region, followed by 'visiting friends and relatives (VFR)' (15.8%) and 'business' (2.4%). Compared to YE Mar 16, visitors who travelled for 'holiday' grew by 10.6%* while 'VFR' declined by 1.4% and 'business' increased by 35.8%.

Origin - share of visitors to North Coast NSW

Rank	Individual market	Share of international visitors to North Coast NSW region				
		YE Mar 16	YE Mar 17	Origin region	YE Mar 16	YE Mar 17
1	United Kingdom	23.3%	20.1%	Europe	59.7%	56.4%
2	Germany	12.1%	12.3%	North America	13.6%	16.9%
3	USA	8.5%	11.4%	Asia	10.5%	11.3%
4	New Zealand	10.8%	9.2%	New Zealand & Oceania	11.9%	10.3%
5	Canada	5.1%	5.5%	Other Countries	4.3%	5.1%

The United Kingdom (20.1%) was the region's largest individual source market of visitors, followed by Germany (12.3%) and the USA (11.4%).

Accommodation in North Coast NSW

'Friends or relatives property' (30.5%) was the most popular form of accommodation used for nights in the region, followed by 'rented house, apartment, flat or unit' (21.3%).

Age groups

'15 to 29 years' (51.6%) was the largest age group of visitors to the region, followed by '30 to 39 years' (17.7%) and '50 to 59 years' (10.2%).

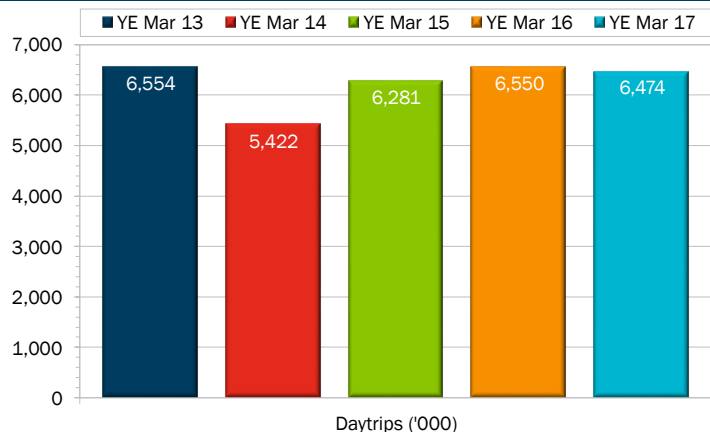
Expenditure (incl 30% prepaid package expenditure)⁴

International overnight visitors spent \$198 million in the region - up by 1.0% on YE Mar 16. On average, they spent \$57 per night - down by 5.6% on YE Mar 16.

(4) Source: TRA's expenditure allocation method applied to IVS data, YE Mar 17.

Domestic Daytrip Travel⁴

Daytrips



North Coast NSW received nearly 6.5 million domestic daytrip visitors - down by 1.2% on YE Mar 16.

Note: The number of domestic daytrips to regional New South Wales increased by 2.3 percent on last year and by 8.4 percent* compared to four years ago.

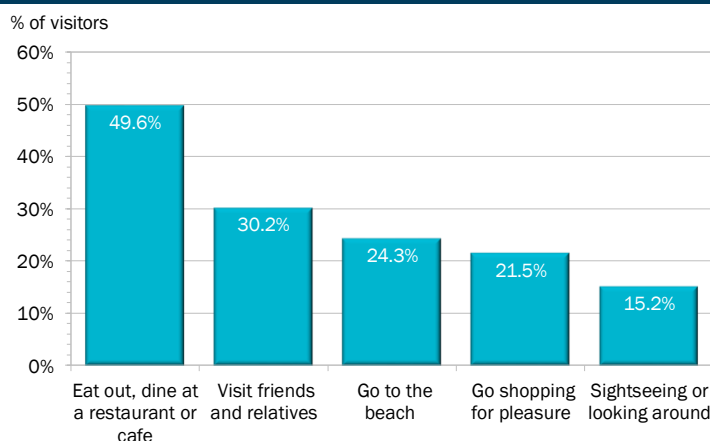
Market share

The region received 17.8% of daytrips to regional NSW. Compared to YE Mar 16, the share was down by 0.6% pts.

Main purpose of trip

'Holiday' (52.2%) was the largest purpose of trip for visitors to the region, followed by 'visiting friends and relatives (VFR)' (28.4%) and 'business' (6.5%). Compared to YE Mar 16, visitors who travelled for 'holiday' declined by 4.2% while 'VFR' grew by 8.6% and 'business' decreased by 5.7%.

Top activities in North Coast NSW



'Eat out, dine at a restaurant or cafe' (49.6%) was the most popular activity undertaken by visitors to the region.

Expenditure³

Domestic daytrip visitors spent \$607 million in the region - down by 8.5% on YE Mar 16. On average, they spent \$94 per trip - down by 7.5% on YE Mar 16.

(3) Source: TRA's expenditure allocation method applied to NVS data, YE Mar 17.

Further information

Please see www.destinationnsw.com.au for profiles on travel to the other regions in NSW and information on international and domestic travel to the State.