

13 MARCH 2025

## **BUSINESS NSW URGES VISITORS TO SUPPORT STORM-DAMAGED NORTHERN RIVERS THIS EASTER**

Business NSW is calling on the people of New South Wales to rally behind the storm-affected Northern Rivers region by choosing it as their holiday destination this Easter.

Business NSW Northern Rivers Regional Director Jane Laverty said the visitor economy is critical to the region's recovery, with local businesses relying on strong Easter trade to sustain operations.

"We are a visitor economy. A lot of people in our region depend on tourism, and we cannot afford to see visitation levels drop," Ms Laverty - who will bring 170 business leaders together in Ballina Thursday for an economic update – said.

"Easter is even more important than Christmas for many businesses, and we need visitors to come, stay, and spend locally to help the region bounce back."

While the physical damage to businesses from the recent storms has been more localised rather than widespread, the indirect impact has been significant, with many operators facing temporary disruptions, supply chain delays, and reduced trade.

Businesses are focused on getting operational as quickly as possible and will be back on their feet by the time of the April 18-21 Easter break.

"Retail and hospitality businesses in our main streets have been hit the hardest. For those relying on weekend trade, the loss of visitors has had a major impact," Ms Laverty said.

"In the immediate term, cash flow is the biggest challenge, particularly for smaller enterprises that operate week to week."

There are more than 32,000 businesses in the Northern Rivers region, which stretches from just north of Coffs Harbour to the Queensland border.

Business NSW CEO Daniel Hunter highlighted broader insurance concerns.

“The issue of insurance is particularly concerning, with businesses in the Lismore 2480 postcode struggling to secure coverage,” Mr Hunter said.

“In Queensland, flood insurance is mandatory, supported by a government-backed insurance pool, and we need to look at how we can strengthen our own regional assets and policies.

“Businesses in NSW are also currently paying the Emergency Services Levy, which adds more than 20% to insurance premiums. This has meant many local businesses have been priced out of the market.

“NSW is the only mainland state to have such taxes on insurance. The NSW Government must press ahead with reforms.”

**\*\*\*DOORSTOP\*\*\***

Media are invited to Business NSW’s economic update event. Northern Rivers Regional Director Jane Laverty will be available for interview to discuss the ex-cyclone’s impact on local businesses.

**WHERE:** Ballina RSL Club, 1 Grant St, Ballina NSW.

**WHEN:** Event starts 7.30am. Interviews can be done after 9.30am.

**LOCAL CONTACT:** Jane Laverty on 0419 260 220

### **About Business NSW**

Formerly the NSW Business Chamber, **Business NSW** is the peak policy and advocacy body which has been representing businesses in NSW since 1826. We represent almost 50,000 businesses.

**MEDIA CONTACT: BEN PIKE – 0429 993 822**

