

Drop in

TO THE MACLEAY VALLEY COAST



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discover something new

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"Drop In" - Macleay Valley Coast

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Welcome

DROP IN

to one of the best waves on the coast at Crescent Head's Killick Beach, a National Surf Reserve and home of the annual Crescent Head Malibu Classic.

CHILL OUT

beside the river in the cultural hub of Gladstone, where you'll find cool cafés, art galleries, fresh local food and fantastic coffee.

DIVE IN

to the underwater wonderland of South West Rocks' Fish Rock, where you'll find exotic sharks and tropical fish in one of the world's best cave dives.

CHECK OUT

the tranquil beauty of Yarriabini National Park to discover a rich indigenous history.

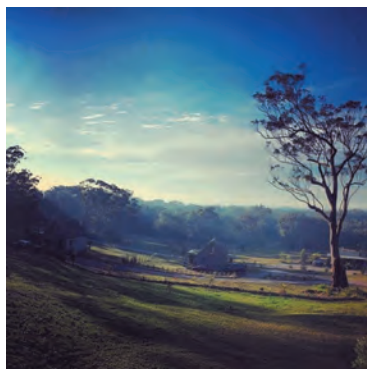
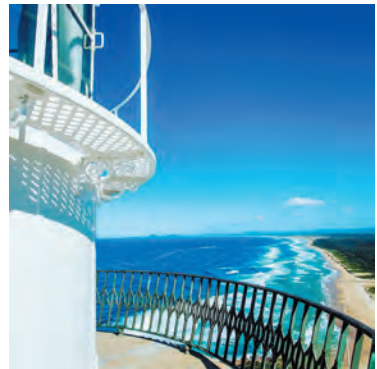
SETTLE IN

to Trial Bay and explore the stunning beaches before discovering Trial Bay Gaol, one of our region's most popular attractions.



#macleayvalleycoast

DROP IN, CHILL OUT, SHARE IT!





macleay valley coast
discover something new



South West Rocks

HOW COASTAL TOWNS USED TO BE

One of Australia's best diving and fishing spots, South West Rocks attracts visitors from all over the world.

Despite its popularity, South West Rocks proudly remains a small coastal town without high-rise development, a testament to its community values. This beautiful coastal paradise is known for friendly locals, long sandy beaches, and visitors lapping up the laid-back vibe.

Diving is big in South West Rocks, with two dive centres operating year-round. Known as 'the divers dive', Fish Rock features one of the only dive-through caves in Australia and, at 120 metres long, is one of the largest ocean caverns in the southern hemisphere. The area is home to an abundance of both temperate and subtropical marine life, including turtles, rays, eels, and fish, as well as being a breeding ground for the rare grey nurse shark.

The coastal town is a true fishing destination and is renowned for its consistency and variety of species. Anglers will find numerous fishing charters and boat ramps in both South

West Rocks and nearby Jerseyville. Other recreational activities include hiking, paddle-boarding, surfing and cycling on South West Rocks' purpose-built bicycle track.

Holiday-makers are truly spoiled for choice when it comes to beaches in South West Rocks. All of them offer crystal clear waters and sparkling white sand. Grab a coffee or some fresh fish and chips and wander down to Horseshoe Bay for a paddle with the kids in the waves, or walk over the hill to find another incredible beach at Trial Bay.

TRIAL BAY GAOL + ARAKOON NATIONAL PARK

Spend a day immersed in the region's convict past at historic Trial Bay Gaol, which was opened in 1886 as a public works prison and used in World War I as a German internment camp. The Gaol closed in 1918 and was later

reopened to become one of the Mid North Coast's most popular attractions. The National Parks & Wildlife Service offers discovery programs at the Gaol throughout the year and various school holiday programs for kids. After exploring the Gaol, wander down the hill to take a dip in the calm waters of Trial Bay, where you'll also find picnic facilities. The holiday park at Trial Bay is a beautiful place to camp, providing hot showers and flushing toilets as well as a beachfront location.

Arakoon National Park is a great place to do some bushwalking. Take a stroll over Monument Hill to the Little Bay picnic area, or enjoy the spectacular half-day walk from the picnic area to historic Smoky Cape Lighthouse in Hat Head National Park, passing stunning granite boulders, secluded beaches and abundant bird life. If you're after some unique accommodation, book into the original lighthouse keeper's cottages at Smoky Cape Lighthouse.



DID YOU KNOW?

South West Rocks has a 1950s country picture theatre showing the latest movie releases. The theatre was recently purchased by cinema buff and celebrity movie critic Andrew Mercado, who moved to the town to take over the theatre in 2016.

◆ TOP: Mermaid Pools [Matt Prior]. ◆ LEFT: View from a walking trail at Arakoon National Park [Matt Prior].
◆ BELOW: Trial Bay Gaol.



Sixty Degrees

South West Rocks chef Matt Atterton has created a sophisticated menu you'd expect to see in Melbourne or Sydney.

Sixty Degrees Café is co-owned by Matt and his partner Emily Mainey. Together they are putting South West Rocks on the map as a foodie destination. The current menu features dishes like the local club sandwich, shakshuka and the coconut, flaxseed and sago porridge with house made charcoal coconut yoghurt.

Matt and Emily have both worked in the hospitality industry all over Australia. They decided to move back to their home town and start their dream business in 2016. Matt grew up in South West Rocks, beginning as an apprentice at the Rockpool Motor Inn before moving to Brisbane and falling in love with the industry while working in a host of high quality restaurants and hotels. "We knew the previous business was looking to sell, so we jumped at

the opportunity to return home and create something new in South West Rocks," Matt says. "Em and I love to travel, but we also love coming home."

Sixty Degrees has won a slew of business awards during the short time they have been open. The café continues to impress locals and visitors with an exotic seasonal menu that revolves around fresh local produce. "My dad is a farmer so I know how hard it can be for producers," Emily says.

"We started using a little bit of local produce and have gradually added more. Now we'll have customers come in with lemons or quail eggs - it's fantastic! We love the creative aspect of incorporating these items into the menu and having a retail option for our customers."

"'Pick of the Crop' supplies us with lettuce, tomatoes and avocados," Matt says. "We also use Kempsey's L-Bo Butchery for our meat. Even our macadamias and bread are locally sourced. I like to drop into the local community garden to pick up fresh herbs and we also love the free-range organic eggs we get through Yamstick in Bellingen - they cost us more but the product is worth it! The feedback we get from our customers tells us we are on the right track."

"We are also working with 'Plastic Free South West Rocks', moving towards being a Responsible Café by reducing our use of plastic - we will be the first in the area!"



Crescent Head

BEAUTIFUL BEACHES AND A VINTAGE VIBE

Perfect waves, Kombi vans and a laid-back feel make Crescent Head a dream come true for the droves of visitors who just can't get enough.

Crescent Head is home to a world-famous surf break so popular with malibu riders that it was named a nationally protected Surf Reserve in 2006. Stroll along the point at the height of summer and you'll feel like you're back in the 70s, as Kombi vans roll in carrying antique surfboards and kids skate along eating Paddle Pops. Despite being inundated with visitors during the warmer months, Crescent Head never loses its vintage charm.

This coastal village is considered to have some of Australia's best beaches, with the crystal-clear waters of Killick Creek and its iconic footbridge

featuring in endless Instagram posts. The creek is popular with families and kids love to float beneath the footbridge or build sandcastles beside the shallow waters.

Crescent Head has a variety of accommodation options, including quaint beach shacks that serve as holiday rentals, making it the perfect place to relax and reconnect with family and friends. The town is set on a headland facing north and many holiday rentals have panoramic views over the ocean. Book early – Crescent Head fills up fast with families who make the pilgrimage to the holiday town every year.

Wander down to the famous Barnett's Bakery for a morning coffee and treat, or sample any one of Crescent Head's fantastic cafés for breakfast or lunch. The Country Club and The Tavern are both popular options for dinner and The Med offers a restaurant option if you're after something more intimate.

If you've still got energy after surfing and swimming all day, be sure to have a game of golf on Crescent Head's spectacular 9-hole course. Grab some mates, hire a cart and enjoy some seriously amazing views.



Mel Timmins

By her own admission, Crescent Head surfer, mum and business owner Mel Timmins is “living the north coast dream”.

Mel is part of a group of ‘surfing mums’ who have created a weekly beach playgroup where each mum has the opportunity to surf while the other women take care of the children.

“It started out with a couple of us who loved surfing but rarely got the chance to go out because we had small children with us 24/7,” Mel says. “It’s great because it allows each mum to have a little time out in the water, knowing that her kids are safe and having fun on the beach and out in nature with their friends.”

Originally from Newcastle, Mel moved to Crescent Head with her husband, Matt, and now six-year-old son, Will,

in 2012. The couple have since added two-year-old Abbi to their family.

“I remember coming here with a five-month-old baby and being really nervous about meeting people,” she says. “But I was welcomed with open arms from the beginning. This community is so friendly and inclusive – it feels like family.”

“I love the whole region and the fact that we have accessibility to some of the most beautiful places that are all so different from each other. If I feel like getting out of Crescent Head for a day, it’s only a 20-minute drive to Gladstone, which has amazing food and heritage and a completely different vibe. We also love going

to Hat Head and South West Rocks, which are completely unique again.”

Mel’s passion for her village and local knowledge led her and a friend to spearhead Salt & Wildflowers, a Crescent Head events and styling company.

“Crescent Head has become a popular destination for weddings and events,” she says. “We could see all these brides coming in and bringing vendors from out of town because they didn’t know about all of the amazing businesses we have here. Salt & Wildflowers is all about showcasing local businesses and offering local knowledge.”



Stuarts Point Grassy Head Yarrahapinni

BEST KEPT SECRETS

Diverge from the beaten track to explore an area that remains one of the Macleay Valley Coast's best kept secrets.

Begin your adventure at the fisherman's paradise of Stuarts Point, a quiet riverside village situated on the arm of the Macleay River as it empties into the Pacific Ocean. If you have a boat or love fishing, this place is a dream come true. With a boat ramp and mooring available, Stuarts Point offers an almost unlimited choice of beach and river fishing spots. The town is also the hub of the area. Choose between a café, take-away store or tavern for lunch, or pick up picnic supplies at the local supermarket.

Walk across the quaint Stuarts Point timber footbridge and pass through the dunes to access the surf beach. If you fancy exploring a little further afield you can take an easy one-hour walk along the beach or over the headland to Grassy Head to see the former mouth of the Macleay River.

In Grassy Head you'll find one of the most unspoilt gems on the coast. Secluded surf beaches and pandanus

palms combine with hidden rock pools and nature walks to make this area the ideal place to get away from it all. Grassy Head is popular with families, thanks to its abundance of fish and bird life, kilometres of white sandy beaches and dense natural bushland. The Grassy Head Holiday Park is nestled behind a hill that backs onto the beach and offers camping and caravan sites as well as cabins, with plenty of grass for picnics or a rowdy game of cricket.

Just behind Grassy Head lie the pristine rainforests of the Way Way State Forest and Yarriabini National Parks – playgrounds for adventure seekers and 4-wheel drive enthusiasts. You can pick up 4-wheel drive maps from the Kempsey Visitor Information Centre to explore this untouched area at your leisure.

If you're after a spectacular view, you'll find it 40 minutes north of Kempsey on top of Mount Yarrahappini. On

a clear day, from the top of the 498 metre mountain you can enjoy unparalleled views of almost the entire Macleay Valley Coast. After taking in the view, drive into the Pines Picnic area, where you'll find yourself surrounded by the dense rainforest of Yarriabini National Park. Facilities include free gas barbecues, a campfire pit with a hot plate, sheltered picnic tables and composting toilets. You'll also find indigenous art and have the opportunity to read about the significance of this area to both the Dunghutti and Gumbaynggirr people. After lunch, stroll through the rainforest to discover the ancient trees, bubbling creeks and vibrant array of native wildlife that make this place sacred to local Aboriginal nations.

After immersing yourself in the greenery of the rainforest, finish your day by watching the sun set from the high vantage point of Grassy Head's magnificent headland. A day well spent!



DID YOU KNOW?

Yarriabini means 'koala rolling'. Yarrahapinni is the corrupted version of the indigenous word.

◆ LEFT: Yarriabini National Park. ◆ ABOVE: Mount Yarrahappini lookout. ◆ BOTTOM: Grassy Head (photo: Calumn Hockey)



Gillian Nicholson

Gillian Nicholson's transition from living in an inner-city Sydney terrace house to a banana plantation in Grassy Head was so life-changing she wrote a book about it.

The accomplished journalist, who enjoyed stints as editor of *Woman's Day* and *Better Homes & Gardens*, penned *This Way to the Sea – The True Story of a New Life with an Old Love* in 2007, documenting the dramatic sea change she chose to make with her husband, Christo, over 20 years ago.

"We stumbled upon this place by accident," she says. "It was a very spontaneous decision – a little bit crazy! This was our dream place to be, right in the bush with a view of the ocean."

They never looked back and Gillian, now 70, still works as a freelance journalist, interspersing office time with maintaining the seven-hectare property (now minus bananas) or walks along the beach.

"I love the little things about this place, like being woken up by the butcher birds or seeing the reflection of the full moon on the ocean from our deck," she says. "We've also made lovely friends – it's a wonderful community."

GILLIAN'S TOP 5 THINGS TO DO

1 | Picnic at The Pines in Yarriabini National Park. "Check out the beautiful mosaic koala sculpture created by local indigenous people and learn about their interesting history. I love the story of the two koalas."

2 | Fish 'n' chips at Stuarts Point. "Order takeaway fish and chips at The Point Café then wander down to the river and watch the pelicans while you eat your lunch."

3 | The Stuarts Point footbridge.

"Walk across the bridge and through the wetlands to the surf beach. It only takes about 15 minutes and it's a beautiful walk."

4 | Spend Christmas at the Grassy Head Holiday Park.

"This place comes alive at Christmas time. Families come from all over the place and deck their tents with fairy lights. The mixed aromas of all the different foods are amazing."

5 | Dine at the Grassy Goose on Grassy Head Road.

"It's only just opened but I had a wonderful slow-roasted pork belly lunch there the other day!"



Gladstone Smithtown and Frederickton

GO WITH THE FLOW

These river villages offer a wealth of arts, history and beauty for everyone keen to take the time to explore them.

If you love heritage, art and funky finds, you'll adore Gladstone, the Macleay Valley Coast's cultural hub. Listed on the Mid North Coast Arts Trail, the town is home to a vibrant arts community, several art galleries and a host of eclectic boutiques and enticing cafés. Enjoy the latest exhibition at the Macleay Valley Community Arts Gallery, which hosts a rotation of talented local artists,

including Gordon Rossiter, Scott and Robyn Jackson and Simone Atkins. History buffs will enjoy wandering the streets to spot the 19 beautifully preserved buildings that give the town its heritage feel.

Don't miss the famous Gladstone Quality Market on the third Sunday of every month from 9am to 2pm at the beautiful riverside park opposite the

Heritage Hotel Gladstone. Brimming with local food, live music and ever-changing arts and crafts stalls, this market is defined by high quality local stallholders who love what they do. Get in quick to snap up the best finds – this market continues to grow in popularity! Afterwards, pop across the road to the Heritage Hotel for a cold beer and a bite to eat. The hotel often hosts live music on Sunday afternoons. ▶



◆ CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:
 ◆ The Old Bank at Gladstone ◆ Gladstone Markets
 ◆ Fredo Pies, Frederickton



► One of the latest and greatest additions to the vibrant community of Gladstone is The Hub, a fascinating building that houses a variety of artist's studios, natural therapists and even hairdressers who are all passionate about their craft and supporting each other. Pick up a divine fair trade basket or one-off fashion piece or simply enjoy one of the best coffees in Gladstone at the Hub's new juice and coffee bar.

There's nothing better than the smell of freshly baked scones, which you can sample at The Old Bank Gladstone, a Heritage listed building built in 1910. Lovingly restored by owners Alan and Tania Cummins, The Old Bank Gladstone offers 22 varieties of loose leaf tea served or three blends of freshly ground

coffee. Dine on the veranda overlooking the river or beside the open fire in the bank chamber or in the parlour beside the leadlight bay window. This is an experience not to be missed!

If you're after a quiet detour, the quaint village of Smithtown lies across the river from Gladstone. Enjoy lunch at the popular Smithtown Hotel, looking out to watch all kinds of vessels entering and exiting the river via the boat ramp. Get out there on the river yourself or peruse the historic shopfronts of Smithtown's main street.

The river town of Frederickton has a rich history of timber, shipbuilding and agriculture. Its charming old homes and nine-hole golf course (where you

can also have a game of Foot Golf) are a draw card.

Frederickton's Fredo Pies & Café remains the Mid North Coast's ultimate pie destination. With over 30 mouth watering fillings to choose from, including the famous crocodile pie, the quick turn off the highway is definitely worthwhile! The addition of a café, local farm produce and delicious breakfast on the weekend means there is something for the whole family.

Spend a lazy afternoon at the riverside park to enjoy a view of the Macleay River and Australia's longest bridge. Wind down with dinner and a glass of wine overlooking the river at the popular Old Cheese Factory.

Deb Broughton

It didn't take long for artist Deb Broughton to settle into the community of Gladstone, a village that supports its creative residents.

After moving to Crescent Head five years ago, Deb began displaying her popular beach-inspired paintings and merchandise at the nearby Gladstone markets. She fell in love with the town and dreamed of opening her own gallery.

"Finally, the perfect building came up and I jumped on it," she says. "I've turned it into a space for me and other artists to display artwork and run workshops and classes."

Deb is also active on the Macleay Valley Community Art Gallery committee, volunteering her time to support and promote local art. She believes the art gallery is central to the arts community, attracting creative residents who want

to settle in the town and continue to build its flourishing arts scene.

"The thing I love about Gladstone is that it's not competitive – everyone supports each other. We just want to get together and make Gladstone an amazing place for people to visit. The Macleay Valley is full of creative people and we are currently setting up an Arts Trail to make it easier for visitors to find them all."

It's not all work for Deb, who loves to relax and wander the streets of Gladstone with her three -year-old son, Joel.

"When I'm here, my son and I usually walk to the bakery and get a coffee in the morning and head to the river to feed the ducks," she says. "I love that

we always see people we know along the way, and we're always discovering new things - like a new artist's studio or a heritage house that we haven't seen before. There are so many hidden treasures here."

When she's not painting in her studio or relaxing at the park, you'll find Deb exploring The Gladstone Hub.

"I can get lost at the Hub," she laughs. "It's such a beautiful place, full of studios of people who are passionate about what they do. You can tell everything in there is created from the heart."

www.facebook.com/DebBroughtonArt
www.facebook.com/mvcag
(Macleay Valley Community Art Gallery)
www.facebook.com/thegladstonehub/





The Hinterland

PRISTINE MOUNTAIN COUNTRY

The Macleay Valley Coast hinterland is arguably the birthplace of Australian country music, boasting the boyhood home of revered Aussie icons, Slim Dusty and his mate, Shorty Ranger.

After driving through this pristine landscape of mountain vistas, deep valleys and winding rivers, you'll soon see where these country greats drew inspiration from. This is Australian mountain country at its best. The Slim Dusty Way begins in Kempsey and takes you on a journey through the hinterland's famed streams and forests to Slim Dusty's original homestead at Nulla Nulla. The heritage listed 'Homewood Farm', attracts a steady stream of visitors year round, who make the pilgrimage from all over Australia. At the homestead, you'll hear a recording of Slim Dusty singing and read about what his life was like growing up. It was at the cow bails on the property that Slim wrote 'When the Rain Tumbles Down in July' during the Macleay Valley floods of 1945.

The village of Bellbrook is the heart of the Macleay Valley hinterland, surrounded by clear creeks, deep

valleys, thick timber forests and the distinctive call of bellbirds. The town was settled by cedar cutters and timber getters whose legacy has been lovingly preserved in the historic township, which is still dominated by the original timber buildings along the wide main street. Bellbrook township is Heritage listed as it is an excellent example of a 1900s timber getting town. The town has a quaint general store, where you can pick up basic supplies, and a popular Heritage pub.

Follow in the footsteps of travellers throughout the century who have stopped in at the historic pub at Willawarrin on their way through mountain country. If you've got time up your sleeve, grab a Willawarrin Historic Walks brochure from the Kempsey Visitor Information Centre and explore the town at your leisure.

Adventurers can discover the surrounding Ngambaa Nature Reserve and Limeburner's Creek

National Park – both offer great walks, pristine rivers and campgrounds where you can sit around a campfire and look up at the stars.

The Upper Macleay River offers some of Australia's best bass fishing, largely due to the secluded and unpolluted waterways. Fishing enthusiasts will be amazed by the area around Bass Lodge, which offers accommodation for large groups. The lodge is an attraction in itself – built of river rocks and completed with milled Cyprus logs assembled without a single nail. Situated at "the junction" between the Macleay River and Georges Creek, Bass Lodge is the gateway to the largely untouched fishing locations and wilderness that requires a 4-wheel drive and an adventurous spirit!

The Macleay Valley Coast hinterland offers a rare opportunity to truly immerse yourself in nature. Grab your tent, hiking boots and fishing rod - there's so much to discover.

Kempsey

THE HEART OF
THE MACLEAY VALLEY

Nestled on the banks of the Macleay River, Kempsey retains its country charm while also serving as the Macleay Valley Coast's major service centre.

In Kempsey, you will find all the amenities of a large regional town, including supermarkets, cafés and boutiques. You'll also discover the friendly smiles and hospitality that are the hallmarks of Kempsey's down-to-earth community.

Kempsey is home to some high-quality attractions that offer an insight into the region's rich history. Spend some time at the architecturally designed Slim Dusty Centre, which includes function and conference spaces, a travelling exhibition gallery, Dusty's Dinner Camp Café and the Slim Dusty Museum.

The award-winning Kempsey Museum houses a fascinating collection of historic artifacts and photographs. It also encompasses a research department for those interested in tracing local family history. The museum is conveniently located at the Visitor Information Centre, beside the Dunhutti-Ngaku Aboriginal Art Gallery, which showcases both established and emerging artists of the Dunghutti region and Mid North Coast.

Visit Wigay Aboriginal Cultural Park in Kempsey for a hands-on experience of the traditional plants and shrubs treasured by local indigenous people. Wander through this beautiful

2.75-hectare park at your own pace, or take an interactive guided tour to learn how the many native trees, shrubs and plants are used by Aboriginal people for food and medicinal purposes.

After taking in Kempsey's attractions, relax by wandering the streets to admire the many and varied examples of colonial architecture or peruse the cafés, antique stores and boutiques. Finish the day off on the banks of the Macleay River, resting under the trees while the kids play at the newly built Riverside Park. If you're lucky, you'll time it in spring when the jacaranda trees flower!

Anne Kirkpatrick

If there's anyone who can shed light on the history of our hinterland, it's Slim Dusty's daughter, Anne Kirkpatrick – a country music star in her own right.

"It really was the cradle of Australian country music," Anne says. "I've heard the stories of the Irish dances they had where the renowned Kyle family played the music. It really was a pretty social and happening place."

Six months before Slim Dusty passed away his boyhood home and property at Nulla Nulla, which he nicknamed 'Melody Ranch', came up for sale. His family wasted no time in buying it back and turning it into a working Angus cattle farm. "Dad was thrilled," Anne says. "All he wanted to do when he was young was travel, but later, the farm meant a lot to him."

"It's been lovely for us. Mum (Joy McKean) built a house on the property and we all adore spending time there. Mum is very involved in the management of the cattle. I like to go walking to the creek and just use my time there to relax and chill out. I'm still planning to learn how to fish though!"

Anne has a few suggestions on getting the best out of the Macleay Valley Coast hinterland.

"I love that road towards Armidale," she says. "It's a bit of a hairy road but it's worth tackling in a 4-wheel drive! I did a painting course with (local artist) Gordon Rossiter and we explored the

scenery up there. It was amazing."

Anne also loves to visit the historic Bellbrook Hotel and has enjoyed playing to a packed audience.

"I love to go there and have a shandy looking over the river – it's the most gorgeous setting," she says. "It was always my ambition to do a gig there and now I've done three!"

Anne was instrumental in conceptualising Kempsey's Slim Dusty Centre. She also performs at the annual Slim Dusty Country Music Festival every year, keeping her father's legacy alive.





Arts, Culture & Heritage

The Macleay Valley Coast is much more than a picturesque landscape of beaches and rainforests – dig a little deeper and discover a thriving arts culture and rich heritage.

This region has a fascinating cultural history that began with its first inhabitants, the Dunghutti people. Local indigenous culture remains strong, and various sacred and ceremonial sites are still used around the region. The Dunghutti-Ngaku Aboriginal Art Gallery houses both permanent and visiting exhibitions of local indigenous art that reflects the beautiful relationship between the people and their environment.

Tucked away in our villages are galleries and cultural centres that allow you to experience exhibitions by local, national and even international artists. The Macleay Valley Community Art Gallery in Gladstone is a great place to view the latest emerging artists. Across the road, the Old Lodge Gallery

Emporium houses a carefully curated collection of local art whilst The Hub is home to a variety of artisan studios.

The Macleay Valley's newest attraction, the Slim Dusty Centre and Museum in South Kempsey invites you to experience the history of country music icon Slim Dusty. The centre also houses a large multipurpose space and regularly hosts touring art exhibitions and performances.

Markets are a great way to discover the local arts and crafts scene. Kempsey Riverside Markets and the Gladstone Quality Market are the largest markets, attracting crowds once a month for live music, great coffee, fresh produce and new finds. Horseshoe Bay and Crescent Head markets are also popular with locals and visitors alike, and reflect the

unique culture of their towns.

Live music fans will love Kempsey's Oddfellows Club, which regularly hosts visiting musicians in an intimate hall setting. You can also check out the live music line-up at any one of our local hotels or taverns that regularly feature the latest up-and-coming local musicians.

Visit Crescent Head and you'll see the telegraph poles that have been painted by a local street artist, and the Melbourne-esque murals that cover the Blackfish café. Poke around the shops in Kempsey and you'll stumble upon the Makas Art Gallery, an initiative of local artists that is run entirely by volunteers. Art on the Macleay Valley Coast is not confined to museums and galleries – it's a way of life.

Pat Indo

Small towns are not often known for cutting-edge street art, but artist Pat Indo has made Crescent Head the exception to the rule.

Pat grew up in Sydney, studying graphic design and working for various advertising agencies and magazines before finding his true calling.

"I got into textile design and from there the art started flowing," he says. "When I moved into a house with no paintings I decided to create my own and it just went from there."

Pat's distinctive style attracted the attention of corporations like ING Direct and Saatchi & Saatchi. Commissions followed and he was invited to be a guest speaker at Vivid Sydney.

During a surfing trip to Crescent Head, Pat met his partner, Kylie, a teacher in Kempsey. He moved to Crescent Head to be with her two years ago, and despite initial reservations about leaving Sydney, he hasn't looked back.

"Crescent Head is a really supportive community for an artist," he says. "I painted the street poles and it's changed the town – people love it."

The artist finds inspiration in the natural environment and surfing culture that surrounds the village.

"I love Point Plomer – there's something mystical about that place," he says. "I love surfing there and spending time just being there. I feel like the people here are really connected to nature. I also love the fact that the indigenous culture is still very strong."

Pat has been given free rein to create ever-changing murals on the walls of Crescent Head's The Blackfish Café, an exchange that has benefited both the artist and the café's owner, Justyn Hope.

"Justyn loves art and we both have a similar vision of what we want to create in this town," Pat says. "People say they feel like they're in Melbourne when they sit down here. That's the impact that art can have on a town."



Eungai Creek Buffalo Farm

One bite of fresh mozzarella on a trip to Italy was all it took for Ian and Kim Massingham to become hooked on the stringy cheese.

After discovering the dearth of buffalo farms in NSW, Kim convinced Ian to buy a pregnant buffalo with the idea of bringing delicious home-grown mozzarella to the Australian market.

The ambitious couple moved their buffalo herd in the Hawkesbury to a biodynamic farm in Eungai Creek in 2012 with plans to expand. Eungai Creek Buffalo Farm now produces a range of dairy products, including soft and mature cheeses, gelato, milk and yoghurt, in addition to meat.

While the farm is located just outside the Macleay Valley, Kim and Ian are active members of the Macleay Valley Food Bowl, a Council initiative that promotes and supports local producers. The Eungai Creek Buffalo Farm stall is a much-loved regular at Macleay Valley markets.

The farm's sustainable roots have allowed Ian and Kim to stay true to their values – continuing to ethically and sustainably produce biodynamic dairy products. The couple are passionate about the humane

treatment of the animals in their care and have a deep connection to the buffalo on the farm.

“Buffalo are beautiful animals,” Ian says. “Working with them is the best part of the job. We’ve got 100 animals with 100 different personalities. It’s wonderful.”

If you can’t make it to Eungai Creek Buffalo Farm, keep an eye out for them at the Kempsey Riverside and Gladstone Quality markets and join the line-up for their gelato!



Local Cuisine

The Macleay Valley Coast is emerging as a quality and organic food destination, thanks to the region's perfect climate and conditions.

Following the development of the Macleay Valley Food Bowl, many local markets, restaurants and cafés have prioritised the use of Macleay Valley produce. Growing numbers of farmers are also making productive use of their land by growing and value adding their produce.

The picturesque Eungai Creek Buffalo Farm has become a tourist attraction since opening a café and farm gate store in 2016. Try a buffalo burger or gelato as you gaze out across the lush pastures. Don't forget to pick up some delicious feta or mozzarella before you leave!

The Kempsey Macleay RSL Club is a long-time supporter of local produce – here you will find local beef and lamb on the menu as well as locally-grown

micro-greens, garlic and blood limes. Kempsey is also home to a fantastic health food store that serves freshly made salads and quiches, and a host of great cafés that take their coffee seriously - try Chaddies or the South Kempsey Corner Store for your morning brew. If you prefer to cook your own food, Kempsey is well known for its high-quality butchers and Tumblegum Bakery does a great sourdough.

Both Crescent Head and South West Rocks have a buzzing café scene which offers a range of healthy, modern choices and, of course, great coffee. Try the Green Room or the Blackfish in Crescent Head, and don't forget to sample the town's exceptional bakery. South West Rocks boasts a couple

of happening pubs and fine dining restaurants. Take a stroll through the village centre and you'll be spoiled for choice. Further afield is Trial Bay Kiosk, which offers stunning ocean views, and if you're after some locally caught seafood, visit the Macleay Valley Fisherman's Cooperative in nearby Jerseyville to pick up the catch of the day.

The historic village of Gladstone has plenty of food choices. Both the Old Lodge Gallery and the Old Bank have cafés in beautifully restored buildings overlooking the Macleay River. If pubs are more your style, enjoy lunch or dinner at the Heritage Hotel Gladstone or drive across the river to the Riverview Hotel in Smithtown for some equally delicious pub grub.



Shopping

Shopping in the Macleay Valley Coast is all about eclectic boutiques, passionate craftspeople and vintage finds.

Start your shopping adventure in Kempsey, where you'll find several high-quality boutiques offering homewares, clothing, art and more. Mahalo Interiors and Harley & Rose in West Kempsey are both must-sees, while the bulk of Kempsey's boutiques can be found in Smith Street. If you're after a bargain be sure to stop in at Macleay Options to salvage some vintage treasures.

Gladstone is fast becoming the region's go-to village for high-quality fashion, jewellery and unique gifts. You'll love the Old Lodge Gallery, whose colour-coded curation of art, gifts, jewellery

and clothing is a work of art in itself. Don't miss Unforgettable 4 Evermore and Mokea Designs for fashion and homewares, or The Hub for one-of-a-kind finds that are largely fair-trade and ethically made. Margaret's Treasure Trove is also a great place to pick up antiques.

Many of the Macleay Valley's villages have signature stores that reflect their unique vibe. South West Rocks is home to some fantastic women's fashion boutiques, including Jellies Swimwear and Rawspice as well as a surf shop and several stores selling coastal fashions. It's also worth visiting

the industrial area to check out Aimee Lee Designs, a funky homeware and fashion store. While you're there, take some time out at the coffee shop and check out the custom made Australian timber furniture. Crescent Head's Pandanus boutique has a unique and high-quality selection of women's fashion and favours Australian designers, ethical production and fair trade.

After shopping on the Macleay Valley Coast, you're sure to return home with something that you or your loved one will treasure.

Shonel Everson Mahalo Interiors

Shonel Everson has her grandmother to thank for the creative flair that makes her West Kempsey homewares store, Mahalo Interiors, such a delight to walk into.

"My grandmother, June Kemp, was a well-known artist in Kempsey and she started teaching me to paint and draw when I was five," Shonel says. "She even took me to art classes with her! That's where my love of art began."

After focusing on art during high school, Shonel studied accounting whilst staying in the Macleay Valley with her husband and two children. She soon discovered that accounting wasn't for her, and began to channel her artistic flair into researching art and homewares. Opening Mahalo Interiors in 2015 was a dream come true.

"It's always been my passion to search for beautiful things," she says. "I basically stock the store with everything I love. Because I've lived in the community for a long time I know

most of my customers and a lot of them trust me and my style."

"I spend hours and hours following brands on Instagram and going to trade shows. I love that I can indulge my passion for homewares without having to move away from Kempsey. We love it here. Our families are here and it's got the beaches and rivers – all the things we love."

Shonel feels at home in the friendly local business community and has developed a positive relationship with the store next door, fashion outlet Harley & Rose.

"We help each other out as much as we can," she says. "We both have the same vision of supplying Kempsey with beautiful, affordable products."





Markets

The region's markets offer a glimpse into the heart and soul of the Macleay Valley Coast.

Several markets operate monthly on the Macleay Valley Coast, including the popular Kempsey Riverside Markets and Gladstone Quality Markets.

Gladstone Quality Markets are held on the third Sunday of every month from 9am to 2pm. Brimming with local food, great coffee, art, craft and locals who are passionate about their wares, this market regularly attracts a big crowd to this usually quiet riverside village. Green thumbs will love the selection of native plants and there is live entertainment by local musicians and performers, as well as regular

face-painting and a jumping castle for the kids.

Kempsey Riverside Markets are held on the first Saturday of every month at Kempsey Riverside Park and include an organic farmers' market that sells premium quality Macleay Valley produce and gourmet foods, with much of it being either organic or chemical-free. Regular seasonal produce includes organic garlic, blueberries, greens, avocados, pumpkins, bananas and citrus. Kempsey Riverside Markets has recently grown from a regular 60

stalls to over 100 and now includes a jumping castle, as well live music entertainment.

Horseshoe Bay Markets at South West Rocks features local producers and artisans in an incredibly picturesque setting. They are held on the second Saturday of every month.

Crescent Head Markets are held on the third Saturday of every month right beside one of Australia's most famous surf breaks. You can't beat that for a prize location.



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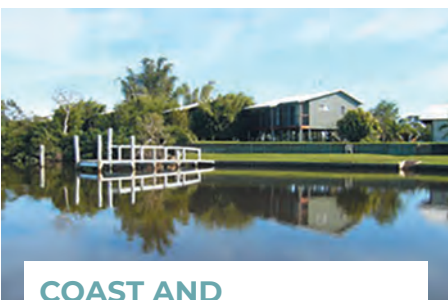
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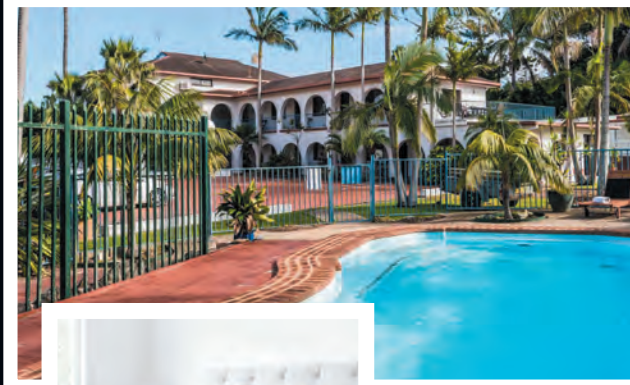
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Pictured: Firewheel Tree by Mabel Ritchie.

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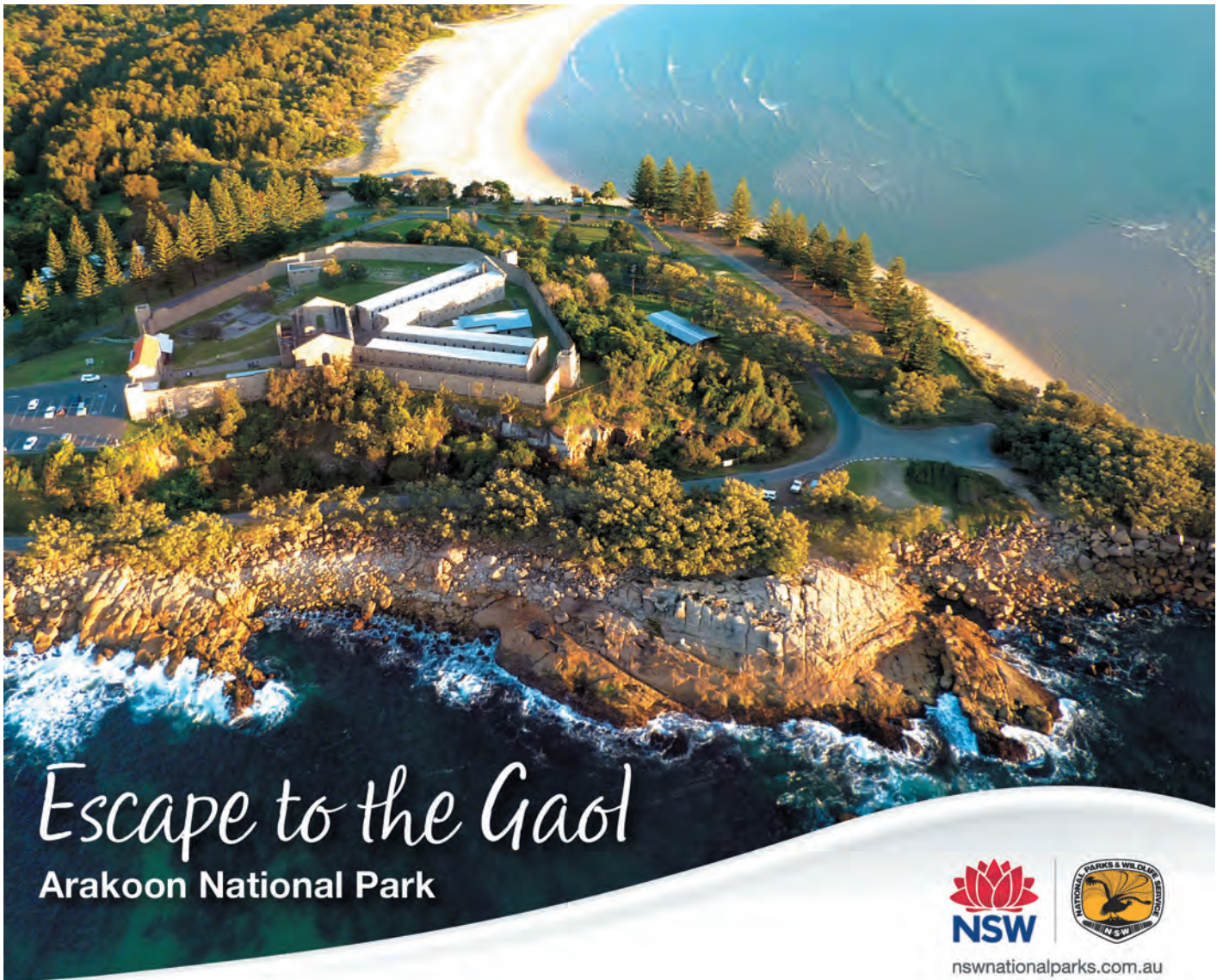
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National Parks and Wildlife Service runs qualified Discovery programs throughout the year and guided tours of the gaol are run during the day and evening in the NSW school holidays (except in winter). Self-guided tours of the gaol are also available between 9am - 4pm daily. Only 10 minutes drive away, located in Hat Head National Park is Smoky Cape Lighthouse. Bookings are essential for camping all year round and for the guided tours during school holidays.

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