

VA & NZ Experience Australia Famil

New South Wales

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Capital Fun In Sydney And NSW

New South Wales is next up on the Air New Zealand and Virgin Australia Great Aussie Experience famil programme this week, with Sydney the first stop on the tour.

Agents experienced the iconic capital of Sydney and beyond to some of the best wineries and beaches NSW has to offer, experiencing first-hand why the tourism industry plays a vital role in the New South Wales economy, boosting it by \$19.7 billion each year.

First stop was Sydney—regularly voted the world's best city for its natural beauty, iconic landmarks such as the Sydney Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge, as well as its world class dining



and shopping to name just a few. It's the nation's gateway and plays a vital role in attracting tourists to Australia.

Pictured in front of Sydney's iconic bridge is Joanna Dargie, Stephen Parsons House of Travel, and Frank Gibbons, Air New Zealand.



Cyren Bar Grill and Seafood

After the BridgeClimb (and perhaps a quick nap), clients can enjoy dinner at Cyren Bar Grill and Seafood. Located on the harbour, it is a perfect place to relax, enjoy some seafood and take in the atmosphere of Sydney. Each Sat evening there is also fireworks on the harbour. So, if clients choose to dine out on a Sat night they can enjoy squid and a show. See nicks-seafood.com.au

Applause All-Round For Matilda The Musical

Matilda the Musical has been met with high acclaim and for good reason. Clients of all ages will enjoy this show, adapted from the Roald Dahl classic book. The show follows young Matilda's life in a world where grown-ups rule and life is unfair. With great performances by young actresses and actors alike, as well as a side-splitting rendition of the infamous Miss Agatha Trunchbull and the antics that surround 'Crunchem Hall', this one should not be missed, especially if clients are inclined to indulge in theatre. See matildathemusical.com

Scaling Iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge A Must-Do



The BridgeClimb is the ultimate way to experience Sydney from above. The fully guided climb takes clients to the summit of the world famous bridge, 134 metres above the city. BridgeClimb takes place in all weather conditions, with the exception of an electrical storm.

Clients can enjoy the almost leisurely stroll to the top covered head-to-toe in overalls while listening to a tour guide, through a headset, telling of interesting bridge facts. The climb can be experienced either express, which takes two-and-a-half hours and sees clients through the inner arch of the bridge; or clients can take the full climb over the outer arch, which takes three-and-a-half hours. BridgeClimb tour guide Kate Heffernan has been leading tours for the past four years and says she loves to enlighten tourists of the history of



the iconic landmark. Heffernan was full of interesting facts when agents went on the tour last week, including a spiel about the history of extended NSW.

"I like the fact that the bridge is still the biggest icon of Sydney. It was built to be an icon and it still is 80 years on. Time hasn't diminished it," Heffernan says.

See bridgclimb.com

PICTURED: 1 The famil group prepares to scale the bridge. **2** Westie Besties: Jo Grundy, United Travel New Lynn with Vanessa Noronha, House of Travel New Lynn.

New Dining Option At Sydney Opera House

Clients can enjoy brunch, lunch or dinner in a relaxed setting at Western Foyer. Located right on the Harbour front, Western Foyer enjoys breathtaking views of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and is only a short walk to shopping, shows and inner-city accommodation.

The menu, which changes seasonally to utilise the best produce available, is designed by celebrity chef Lauren Murdock. She likes to keep it fresh, with Australian and NSW flavour combinations influencing the menu heavily.

The restaurant has been open just one month and it is recommended clients enjoy a sunset meal to view the Sydney Harbour at its most picturesque.

See sydneyoperahouse.com

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Wine And Cheese In Hunter Valley



Day two of the Destination NSW famil trip saw agents head into the Hunter Valley, two hours inland from Sydney and well known for exquisite wineries and cheese making.

The combination makes it extremely popular with tourists and locals alike, with many in Sydney making the journey into the region for a weekend getaway.

Recommend clients take Australian Eco Adventures Luxury Tours to get the best knowledge of the area from expert guides. See aealuxury.com.au

Redsalt Restaurant

After a long day tasting wines and cheeses why not head to the Crowne Plaza for dinner.

Surrounded by picturesque vineyards, golf course greens and framed by the rugged Brokenback ranges, Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley epitomises the best of hospitality and deluxe accommodation. Views across a scenic 18-hole golf course, swimming pool and vineyard surround its signature restaurant. Clients can also enjoy beer and whiskey brewed on site, along-side innovative meals renowned for the use of fresh and local produce.

... Wineries

Hunter Valley is plentiful in vineyards, and clients can take a day trip or spend longer, ideally, to get more from their stay.

Bimbadgen Winery offers a special experience. With views over the valley clients can taste quality wines from 30-year-old vineyards, stroll through manicured gardens or enjoy lunch at the award-winning upstairs restaurant overlooking magnificent views and offering fresh Australian cuisine. Bimbadgen has a large amphitheatre, which hosts several music events throughout the year, including A Day on the Green. See bimbadgen.com.au

... Dodge The Hangover

McGuigan Wines offers an educational talk before tasting. Clients can learn about the wine making process of both reds and whites—and receive interesting facts such as how to reduce the risk of a hangover. Guide Steve Shearer says look for additive 220, it's a sulphur and is put on the vines to kill insects and to increase shelf life. Egg and nut proteins can also contribute to a headache the next day, as well as bentonite which is a volcanic clay used in the filtering process of some wines. See mcguiganwines.com.au



1 The group at Bimbadgen Winery. **2** Lendl Oosthuizen, Flight Centre Lambton Quay with some local lavender. **3** Gemma Pearce, House of Travel Barrington with Vanessa Noronha, HoT New Lynn at Audrey Wilkinson Vineyard. **4** Take notes: Steve Shearer of McGuigan Wines offers tips on beating the hangover. **5** Sampling the wares at McGuigan Wines. **6** McGuigan barrels.



Tastings At Hunter Valley Cheese Factory

The Hunter Valley is a producer of delicate cheeses. Visit Hunter Valley Cheese Factory for an insightful tasting, where clients can learn about the production of hard and soft cheeses. Taste fottage, brie, blue and cheddar cheeses all made on site, with the exception of the blue cheese which must be made at a separate facility because of the bacteria used. See huntervalleycheese.com.au

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Zippering Over Giant Coastal Dunes

On day three of the Virgin Australia and Air New Zealand Destination NSW famil, agents journeyed an hour-and-a-half to the coast for seaside entertainment. First stop was Williamtown, home to the largest sand dunes in the Southern Hemisphere, and the group got to experience them first-hand with Sand Dune Adventures.

The company offers guided quad bike tours taking place on private freehold lands contained within the unique coastal sand dunes of the Stockton Bight.

Clients can jump on their own quad bike and zip over the monstrous sand mountains led by knowledgeable guides.

The dunes are owned by the Aboriginal land council and most guides share the heritage and are indigenous to the region.

Manager Scott Newlin and guides Rob Chaffey and Tyson Stamp offer one-and-a-half hour tours where

clients can sand toboggan over the dunes. Or a two-and-a-half hour Aboriginal culture sand tour where clients can learn of the culture of the indigenous Worimi clan, including traditional bush tucker and the whereabouts of ancient burial sites as well as information on ancient weaponry.

Prices start at AUD110 for adults and AUD65 for children aged as young as seven. Earliest tours kick-off at 0800, with the last leaving at 1800.

See sandduneadventures.com.au

Sandpipers Restaurant

Located in the heart of Nelson Bay CBD, Sandpipers Restaurant offers great food and service in a relaxed atmosphere. Clients can taste the freshest local seafood, on the restaurant's modern Australian menu.

Sandpipers is family owned, giving it a homely warmth for clients to enjoy. See sandpipersrestaurant.com.au

Nelson Bay Beaches

Located on the southern shores of Port Stephens, Nelson Bay offers beautiful beaches such as Dutchmans Beach and Little Beach. It is ideal for a wide range of water activities including diving and snorkelling. Clients can stop for lunch at Crest in the Birubi Point Surf Life Saving Club, a destination for fine food perched at the northern end of Stock Bight with views across the Stockton Sand Dunes and the extended coastline. Clients can enjoy the large servings of amazing cuisine and take a dip in the ocean afterwards to cool off. See crestbirubibeach.com.au

Pictured: **1** Gemma Pearce, House of Travel Barrington and Vanessa Noronha, House of Travel New Lynn, at Birubi Beach. **2** Jodi Muggeridge, Mondo Travel Hawera, at Crest.



Tackling The Famous Williamtown Sand Dunes By Quad Bike



Dolphin Watch Cruise

Tamboi Queen Cruises offers clients a choice of four boats with a variety of departure times for Dolphin Watching cruises.

Experienced skippers tell about the dolphins in Nelson Bay's port in an informative way. Clients can also swim in nets attached alongside the boats while the boat glides gently across the water. The small bar on-board allows for a relaxing ride, they even carry ice-creams for clients who really want to chill. See tamboiqueencruises.com

Karen Start of Flight Centre Napier is pictured enjoying a Titanic moment on the cruise.

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TABS ON
**TRAVEL
TODAY**

Fri 16 Oct 15 p5

Vibrant Newcastle On Final Famil Day



On day four of the Destination NSW Air New Zealand and Virgin Australia Great Aussie Experience famil, agents departed Port Stephens and headed to Newcastle.

Newcastle is a vibrant cosmopolitan city, with rich maritime history, vibrant arts culture, cool bars, acclaimed restaurants and accommodation aplenty.

The emerging food scene in

Newcastle is evident in the great restaurants, bars and outdoor cafes around the city.

Clients can sip cocktails at one of the many harbour side restaurants or bars at Honeysuckle or head to Beaumont Street in Hamilton to dine at outdoor Mediterranean-style cafes.

Darby Street, in Cooks Hill, is a bohemian strip with eclectic boutiques, bookshops and cafes, perfect for a late breakfast.

Pictured in Newcastle is:

1 Joanna Dargie, Stephen Parsons House of Travel and Storm Halkett, Flight Centre The Palms.

2 Vanessa Noronha, House of Travel New Lynn, with Tenille Jenkins of Destination NSW.

3 Frank Gibbons, Air New Zealand and Jo Grundy of United Travel New Lynn.

TreeTop Adventures For All Ages And Abilities

Located on the Central Coast, TreeTop Adventure Park is the perfect place for all ages to experience some excitement. The multi-award winning park caters for all people from all walks of life and levels of fitness. It prides itself on its ability to allow those with disabilities to enjoy tree top thrills. Like Tarzan deep in the jungle, clients can slide down flying foxes, move from tree to tree on suspension bridges and jump up to 20-metres above the forest floor. These eco-friendly adventure activities are great for the body and mind, and gentle on the environment. Recommend clients ready their lungs for a trip to the park, as screams on the 21 flying foxes make the ride more enjoyable. And lunch can be provided in the TreeHut within the park. Suspended between spotted gum trees, it is a rare opportunity to experience the amazing location of Ourimbah State Forest from the tree tops. See treetopadventurepark.com.au



1 The TreeHut. **2** Storm Halkett of Flight Centre The Palms. **3** Lendl Oosthuizen of Flight Centre Lambton Quay is ready to roll. **4** Child on the ropes at the TreeTop Adventure Park. **5** TreeTop gang get ready for action.

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