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Please share this newsletter with other local businesses, become a member of the Hawkesbury Business Hub (it's free!) and please tell us what you think by contacting business@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au.

Mayoral Column



Welcome to the February edition of the business newsletter

Wishing you all a Happy New Year! 2024 is shaping up to be another busy year.

This edition is filled with information on Emergency Preparedness, Training and Workshop opportunities for small businesses and small business grants that are available.

I encourage all businesses to engage with programs being offered by local, state, and federal governments and to utilise the services and information provided throughout this newsletter to help support your business needs.

Sincerely,
Mayor Sarah McMahon

In the Hawkesbury

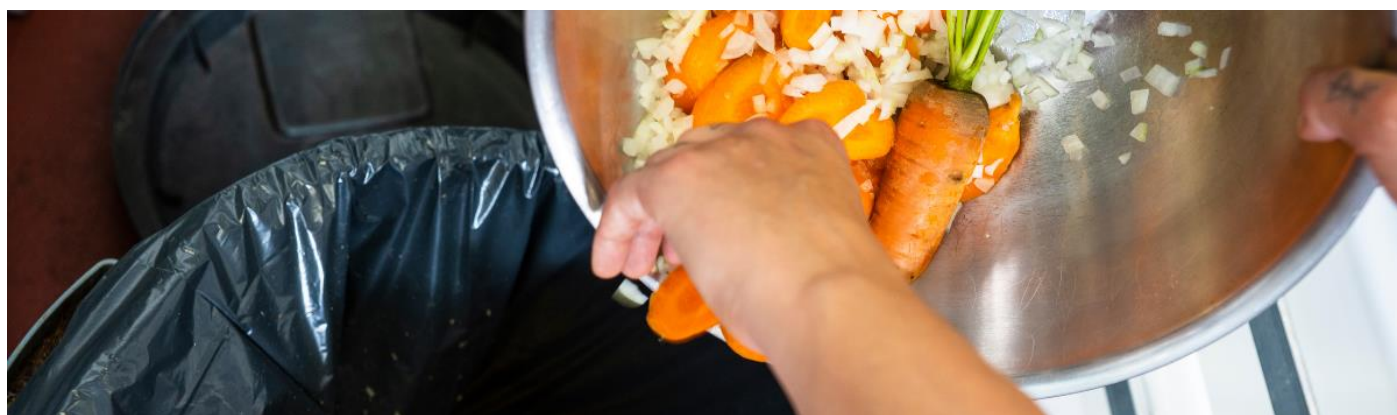


Zero Barriers

Hawkesbury City Council is a proud partner in the [Zero Barriers](#) project and are committed to promoting and supporting the inclusion of all residents and visitors within the Hawkesbury region.

We aim to encourage all initiatives that help towards making the Hawkesbury LGA more accessible for residents and visitors, and for people with disability.

[Click here](#) to download the flyer for more information.



Love food, hate waste

Do you love food but hate waste? Hawkesbury City Council has put together some helpful tips for businesses on how to reduce waste and work more sustainably.

Register your business for a BYO container scheme

Demonstrate your commitment to reducing single-use plastic waste by registering your business with [BYO Containers](#).

Check what produce is in season

Reduce food wastage by planning meals based on what produce is in season. Use seasonal guides made by organisations like [Sustainable Table](#) to assist you in checking what's in season throughout the year.

Donate your excess

According to [Foodbank's 2023 Hunger Report](#), 3.7 million Australian households experienced food insecurity last year. Meanwhile, over 7.6 million tonnes of food is wasted in Australia every year. Help reduce food waste by helping those who are struggling put on the table. Donate excess food to your [local community services](#) or to organisations like [Secondbite](#) and [OzHarvest](#).

Register your business for the EPA Bin Trim App

Bin Trim is a free online portal providing support to NSW businesses to help them avoid and reduce waste. [Sign up](#) to register a site, complete a waste assessment, create an action plan and track your progress.

Download Council's Love food, hate waste flyer [here](#).



Free Touchpoints Community Suicide Prevention Workshops

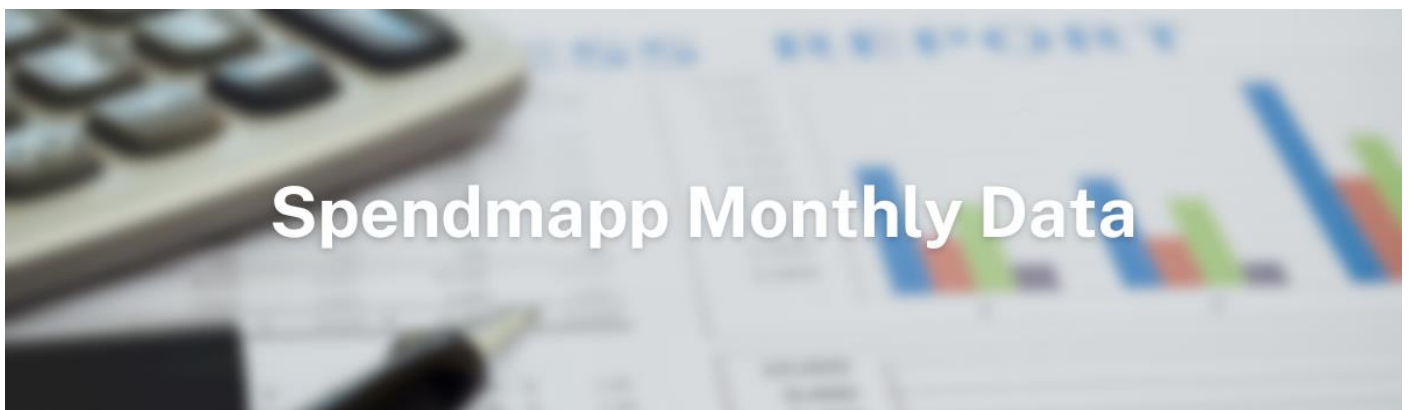
The factors contributing to suicide are complex, and knowing someone who took or attempted to take their own life in Australia is common, with 36.2% of Australians aged 16–85 years reporting they were close to someone who took or attempted to take their own life. Research also indicates that 135 people are affected by each suicide death, with 10 or more significantly impacted.

The [Nepean Blue Mountains PHN](#) have commissioned [Roses in the Ocean](#) to deliver free four-hour community [Touchpoints Workshops](#), designed to give community members an insight into suicide through the lens of lived experience and equip them with the right knowledge and practical tools to reduce others' emotional pain.

The workshop is especially useful for those who have regular community contacts, like hairdressers, baristas, taxi drivers, sports coaches, newsagents and pharmacy staff. It can also assist those in the workforce who have regular contact with staff, for example, receptionists and Human Resources staff.

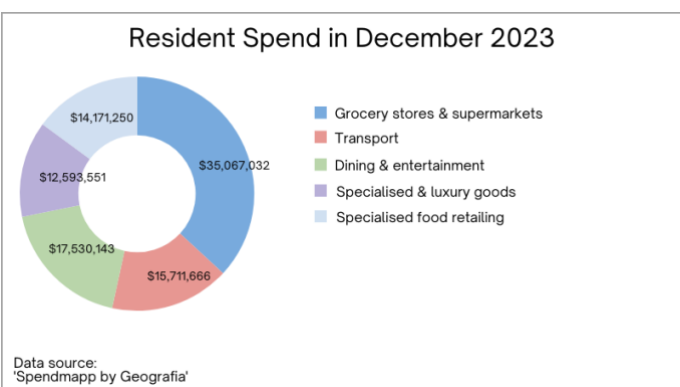
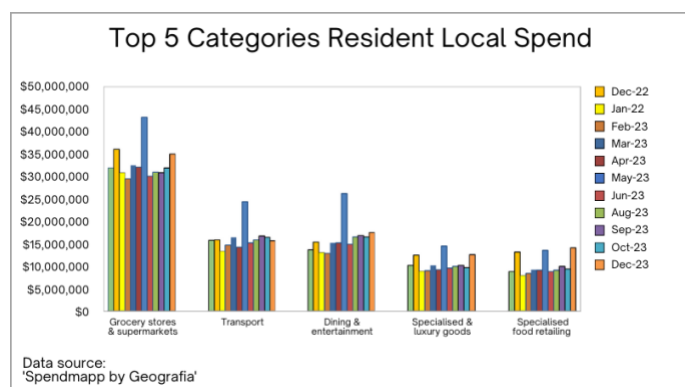
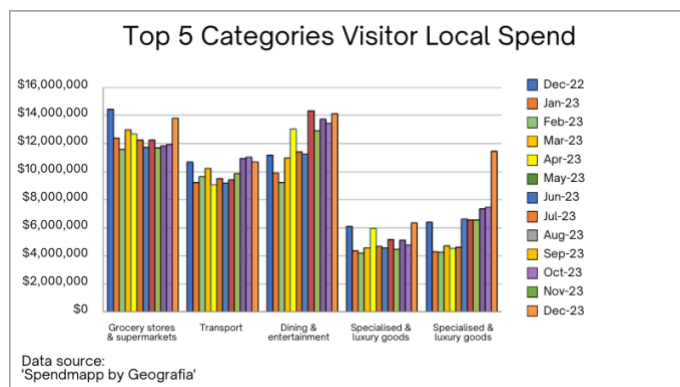
A Hawkesbury workshop will be held at the Windsor RSL on **Saturday 17 February 2024** from **9am to 1pm**. You can register to attend online [HERE](#).

To find out more about other upcoming workshop dates and locations visit the [Nepean Blue Mountains PHN website](#).



[Spendmapp](#), developed by Geografia, is an economic modelling tool. It uses bank data to measure consumer spending of both locals and visitors in the geographic area over certain time periods. It can help to determine patterns of spending, by who and where, to get a better picture of the local economy.

Using the data can help inform, manage, and help also to respond to long term economic trends and shocks and also gain insights into the visitor economy, online expenditure and escape expenditure. Spendmapp is used by a number of local government areas.



December 2023 showed an increase for both resident and visitor spending in four of the five categories, which means residents and visitors are starting to spend more in our LGA.

Get Bushfire Ready



Be prepared, informed and ready this bushfire season

As we come into what is set to be the most significant bushfire season since the 2019/20 black summer fires, businesses are being urged to prepare. There are many ways a bushfire can impact your business, such as road closures and blackouts, so even if you're not in a fire zone, you could still be at risk.

Preparing your business to withstand a bushfire or other natural disaster is vital for every business owner.

Visit Council's [Disaster and Emergency Dashboard](#) and [Prepared, Informed and Ready webpage](#) for more information on emergency preparedness in the Hawkesbury.

The NSW Small Business Commissioner's four Get Ready for Disasters guides and Get Ready for Disasters Kit can help you prepare so you can minimise impacts and get back to business sooner.

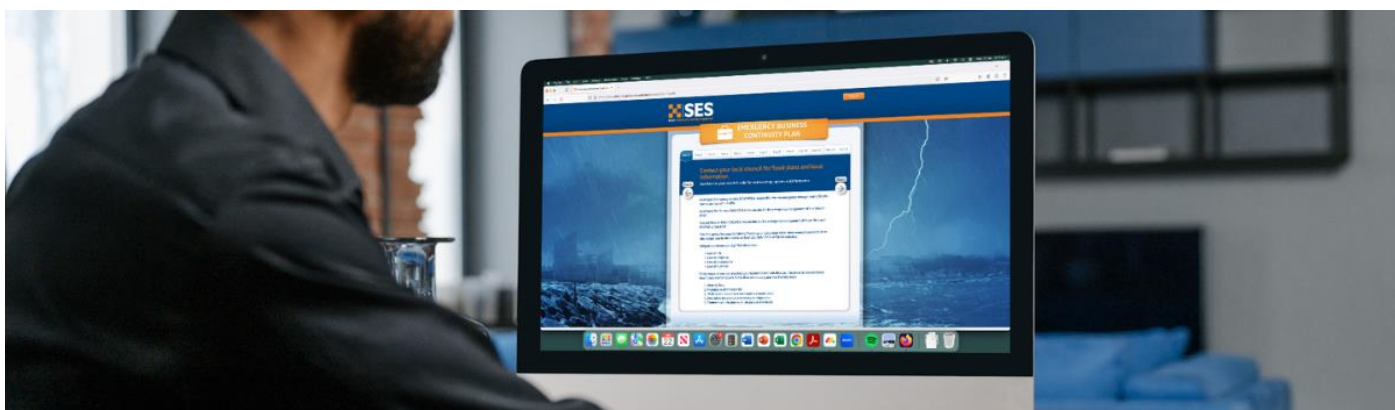
Get the guides



BushfireHub

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) [BushfireHub](#) is a great tool for anyone looking to find support after a bushfire emergency. Through the BushfireHub, primary producers, farmers and landholders can access information about recovery, financial assistance, mental health programs and more.

Visit the BushfireHub



Emergency Business Continuity Plan

Knowing the risks that can affect your business during extreme weather events and natural disasters helps you to better plan and prepare for them, as well as increase the safety of employees, reduce damage and associated costs, and get your business back on its feet faster.

One way you can prepare is by taking the time to make your [Emergency Business Continuity Plan](#) using the NSW SES online tool, which will only take about 10 minutes to complete.



Live Bushfire Ready – My Fire Plan

Having a plan gives you and your business a better chance when bushfires hit. Take the time now to prepare, so you know what to do when the time comes.

It takes as little as five minutes to make your bush fire plan. Get started on the [MyFirePlan](#) website today.

The image shows a hand holding a smartphone. The screen displays the 'Hazards Near Me NSW' app. At the top, there's a status bar showing '3:58' and 'App Store'. Below that, there are tabs for 'Map' and 'List'. The main part of the screen is a map of New South Wales, Australia, with several yellow triangular hazard icons (containing a flame or a lightning bolt) placed over different regions. At the bottom of the map, there's a blue button that says '+ Create a Watch Zone'. Below the map, it says 'Last update: less than a minute ago'. To the right of the phone, there's a large, bold heading 'Download the Hazards Near Me NSW app'. Below this heading is a blue square icon with a white triangle and a lightning bolt. Underneath the icon, there's a paragraph of text: 'Download the app on your smartphone to get up to date information on emergencies in your area and get notified when things change.'

Download the Hazards Near Me app

Download the Hazards Near Me NSW app to get the most up to date information about local emergencies, including flood, bushfire and tsunamis, and advice on what to do to stay safe. The app also provides other warnings and activities for your area, such as current fire danger ratings, fire bans and hazard reductions.

Search the app store or use the links below to download the app on your smartphone or tablet:

IOS (apple)

Android

[View hazards on your desktop](#)

To view current bushfire alerts and warnings on your computer, visit the [NSW Rural Fire Service website](#).



Fire farm safety

If you live or own a farm or property, it is important that you know what to do in the event of a bushfire and prepare early. To help you get bushfire ready this season, the NSW RFS have worked with farmers to create the **Farm Fire Plan** and the steps below to help manage fire risks on your land.

Four steps to help get you ready

[PREPARE](#): prepare your property and take action

[DISCUSS](#): what will you do in the event of a fire

[KNOW](#): know the conditions

[KEEP](#): keep the bushfire information numbers, websites and smartphone app

More information

You can find more information on how to get yourself and your property ready for bushfires on the [NSW Rural Fire Service website](#).



Bushfire Resilience Rating Home Self-Assessment

The Bushfire Resilience Rating Home Self-Assessment app, developed by the [Resilient Building Council](#) and funded by the Australian government, brings decades of research and expertise on bushfire resilience into the hands of Australian households through an easy-to-use tool.

Through the free app, households can measure the bushfire resilience of their home and receive a customised action plan.

Get Started

Business News & Updates



Changes to food safety Standard 3.2.2A

In December last year the new Food Safety Standard 3.2.2A came into force, affecting most Hawkesbury food businesses, who are expected to comply with the requirements by **8 December 2024**.

For more information visit the NSW Food Authority's [dedicated webpage](#), where you can search for relevant information by business or service.

You can also download the [Standard 3.2.2A – Guideline for businesses](#) (PDF, 346, KB)



Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative Small Network Grants



Small Network Grants Program

The Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal (FRRR) are now offering Small Network Grants to community organisations in regional and rural Australia to develop and deliver one-off events or initiatives that strengthen community networks and build drought preparedness.

The Small Network Grants, with the support of the Australian Government, will fund networks, community events, training initiatives, community infrastructure, development and learning initiatives that assist local people and communities to strengthen social capital and capability to prepare for future droughts.

Two streams of grants are available via two rounds:

- Up to a maximum of \$20,000; or
- Up to a maximum of \$50,000 (dependent on location).

The first round has now closed, but applications for round 2 will open **13 February 2024**. For more information on the program visit the [FRRR website](#).



Grants and Program Finder

Use the Australian Government's [Grants and Program Finder](#) tool to explore what grants, funding and support programs are available to you. Search by location, industry, support type, business structure and more.



More grants, rebates and support for small business

Explore some of the financial supports available to NSW businesses right now.

Electric vehicles rebate

The NSW Government is offering \$3,000 rebates for the first 25,000 new battery electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles with a dutiable value of less than \$68,750. This incentive, along with the abolition of stamp duty, will save eligible EV purchasers up to \$5,540. [More information](#).

Small Business Export Loan

The Small Business Export Loan provides small to medium export businesses with loans to cover up to 80% of the costs to secure an export contract or purchase order with an overseas buyer. [More information](#).

Energy Savings Scheme

The Energy Savings Scheme (ESS) provides NSW businesses with financial incentives to invest in projects which will reduce their energy consumption. Incentives are available to install new equipment or modify a current system. [More information](#).

Find more grants using the NSW Government's [grant finder](#).



NSW Government eases small business procurement rules

The maximum amount government departments and agencies can use to purchase goods and services directly from a small or medium businesses has been raised from \$150,000 to \$250,000, making it easier for small and medium businesses to sell to the Government.

Along with amendments made to state procurement rules, the Government has also adopted a proposal from the NSW Small Business Commissioner and will no longer require small businesses to submit proof of insurance when they tender. Instead, proof of insurance will only be required when a contract is awarded.

For more information, visit <https://buy.nsw.gov.au>.



Small business skills and training boost

Check to see whether you're eligible to claim a 20% deduction on certain training expenditure for your employees.

Through the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), small businesses with an aggregated annual turnover of less than \$50 million will be allowed an additional 20% tax deduction for external training courses delivered to employees by registered training providers.

The boost applies to eligible expenditure incurred from 7:30 pm AEDT on 29 March 2022 until 30 June 2024.

[Check eligibility](#)

Upcoming Workshops



NSW First Program virtual workshop

Join Destination NSW for this free, half-day Sell Online virtual workshop and find out how to increase bookings through online sales – both direct and indirect – by using online booking software, creating effective ATDW-Online listings, and working with online travel agents (OTAs) to grow online visibility.

[Register now](#)



Australian Tourism Industry Group events

The [Australian Tourism Industry Group](#) (ATIG) is a not-for-profit, organisation that provides digital marketing services and support to tourism (and tourism-related) businesses, organisations, and Governments across Australia.

Each month, ATIG provides a free digital marketing for tourism webinar, which includes advice and information via a live chat with Digital Business Advisers that have experience in the tourism industry.

This month's webinar is 'The Power of Visual Storytelling: Lights, Camera, Tourism Magic!' and focuses on revolutionising your marketing strategy to captivate audiences.

Date: Monday 19 February 2024

Time: 10am - 11am AEDT

Location: online

[Register now](#)



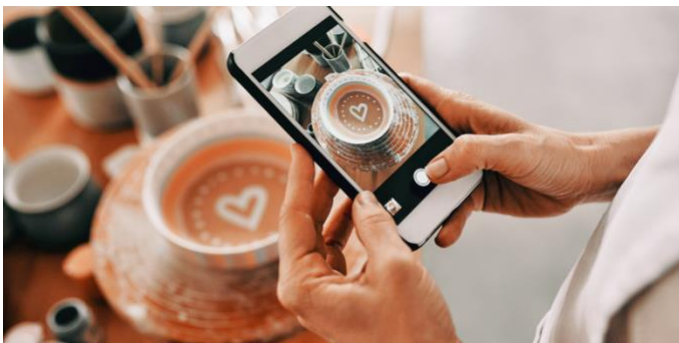
How to start a business – Western Sydney
Wednesday 7 February + 10am (online)

[Register](#)



How to set up your website
Tuesday 13 February + 10am (online)

[Register](#)



2024 key social media trends for businesses
Thursday 15 February + 10am (online)

[Register](#)



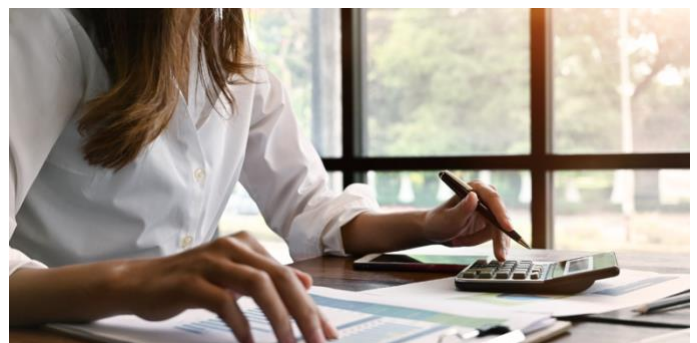
Marketing fundamentals for small businesses
Wednesday 21 February + 1pm (online)

[Register](#)



How to improve customer satisfaction
Thursday 22 February + 1pm (online)

[Register](#)



Financial fundamentals
Tuesday 27 February + 1pm (online)

[Register](#)

