

Jodi McKay

Minister for Tourism
Minister for the Hunter
Minister for Science and Medical Research
Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)



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Big Joke a boost for Bangalow

Bagalow is the place to be if you're looking for a good laugh this weekend, with the town hosting a stellar line-up of comedians for its annual Big Joke Comedy Festival.

Minister for Tourism Jodi McKay said the festival, now in its third year, is a fun weekend and a great way to showcase what the Northern Rivers region has to offer.

"The Bangalow Big Joke Festival is growing every year, and this weekend's event promises to be the biggest yet," Ms McKay said.

"The organisers have outdone themselves, with a line-up that includes multi award-winning international comedian Tim Minchin, UK-based performer and comedian Nina Conti, Australian TV writer and stand-up comedian Kitty Flanagan, rising star David Williams and comedy veteran and Festival Director Mandy Nolan.

"There will be day and evening comedy performances across the weekend as well as fun events such as kids' joke-telling and cartooning workshops."

Ms McKay said the festival will bring thousands of visitors to Bangalow and surrounding towns helping to bolster the local economy.

"The festival setting is among the most spectacular in NSW, with Bangalow's secluded waterfalls, pristine rainforests, rolling green hills and panoramic views," Ms McKay said.

"This festival not only provides a boost to local businesses and tourism operators but helps promote the area for return visits."

Ms McKay said the Big Joke Festival had received \$10,000 funding support through Tourism NSW's Regional Flagship Event program.

Big Joke Festival Director Mandy Nolan said the funding helped organisers promote the festival to a wider audience than would have otherwise been possible.

"The Bangalow Big Joke Festival gives visitors the opportunity of seeing international headline acts in an intimate regional setting. City counterparts would have to line up just to squeeze into the back of a massive auditorium.

"It's the perfect and most fun way to promote what our area has to offer."

For information on the 2009 Bangalow Big Joke Festival, which runs March 26-29, go to www.thebigjoke.com.au.

The Northern Rivers received more than 5.1 million visitors to the year ending December 2008, injecting more than \$1.3 billion into the local economy.

For more information on the other events and attractions of the Northern Rivers Region go to www.visitnsw.com.