



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

9 AUGUST 2022

Blind singers headline gala dinner at Australia's first Sensory Tourism Conference

The Voice Australia contestants Lara Nakhle and Connor Wink will perform at a gala dinner for the Sensory Tourism Conference & Gold Crest Explorer Expo on the NSW Central Coast at Ibis Styles The Entrance on Sunday, 11 September 2022.

Conference organiser Cocky Guides is also an event sponsor of White Stick Fest, an online music festival produced on 15 October annually to support International White Cane Day. The festival is a collaboration that showcases blind and low-vision artists from around the world. Lara and Connor performed at White Stick Fest in 2021. Emerging low-vision vocalist Summer Giddings will join Lara and Connor and perform as the support act at the conference.

The founder of Cocky Guides, James (Buck) McFarlane, says, "It's great to support White Stick Fest. But it gives me even greater satisfaction to offer a platform like the Sensory Tourism Conference that provides blind and low vision artists more opportunities for live performance."

The Sensory Tourism Conference & Gold Crest Explorer Expo also showcases many accessible local tourism businesses. Tour operators like Broken Bay Pearl Farm, Girri Girra Aboriginal Experiences, Central Coast Surf School, Gosford Regional Gallery and Edogawa Commemorative Garden participate in one of three itineraries for blind and low-vision travellers to explore the Central Coast. From the beach to the bush or the burbs, Cocky Guides deliver experiences for participants' preferred choice of activity level.

The event begins with a coach transfer from Sydney on Sunday, 11 September 2022, followed by a day of social interaction, guest speakers, panel discussions and a 3-course dinner. On day two, travellers can select from one of three itineraries and experience NSW's accessible Central Coast based on the traveller's preferred activity level - relaxed, classic (moderate) or active. Day three is an expo format with guest speakers to share more about services in sensory tourism and independent travel.

The complete program is available online. With only three weeks before registrations close on Friday, 26 August 2022, now is the time to register! Learn more and register today at www.goldcrestexplorer.com

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CONTACT

For further information: please get in touch with James (Buck) McFarlane at buck@cockyguides.com.au or call 0403 827 666

ABOUT LARA NAKHLE

Lara Nakhle is a blind New Zealand-born Australian singer/songwriter from Sydney with Lebanese heritage who performed on The Voice Australia in 2017. Lara has experience at many local and national events. She is a very busy young lady, studying for a Master's in Creative Music Therapy and working with Apple Australia as a technology and accessibility specialist. Still, she continuously advocates for disability and people to follow their goals and dreams. Lara is a fantastic singer and pianist.

For more information, visit <http://platinumcre8ive.com/talent/lara-nakhle-2/>

ABOUT CONNOR WINK

Connor Wink is a blind singer/songwriter from Newcastle who has been singing for many years and this year made it to the top 48 on The Voice Australia. His blind audition song 'Believe' by Cher has now had over 7 million views in three months. Connor is a fantastic singer and guitarist.

For more information, visit <http://platinumcre8ive.com/talent/connor-wink/>

ABOUT SUMMER GIDDINGS

Summer Giddings is a singer from Sydney, legally blind with cerebral palsy; she is also a track and field athlete. Competing in many local and national para-athletic events over the years, she broke the world record in the long jump at the 2018 world championships in Spain & is currently studying the first year of a Cyber Security Bachelor's Degree.

For more information, visit <http://platinumcre8ive.com/talent/summer-giddings/>

ABOUT COCKY GUIDES

Since launching in August 2018, Cocky Guides have specialised in providing unique, multisensory adventures for the blind and low-vision community. More than 500 travellers have visited over 50 destinations with Cocky Guides.

Cocky Guides is the recipient of the Bronze Award for Excellence in Accessible Tourism at the prestigious 2021 NSW Tourism Awards and the Micro Business category winner at the 2021 Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence.



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There are over 575,000 Australians who are blind or have low vision. Cocky Guides aims to be the leading support provider for group adventure and travel, designed to increase independence, plus social and community participation for blind and low-vision Australians.

For more information, visit www.cockyguides.com.au