



Destination
North Coast NSW

North Coast News & Views No. 114

Dine & Discover Program

The NSW Government's major economic stimulus program for dining, arts and tourism businesses impacted by COVID-19, is designed to encourage customers to get out and about safely and purchase from restaurants and cafes and tour and activity providers.

Residents of NSW aged 18 and over are eligible for \$100 worth of vouchers to be used at [participating NSW businesses](#) who are registered as COVID safe. The program is now rolling out state-wide and operators can join any time before it ends on 30 June 2021.

Please support your fellow tourism operator by prompting visitors to use their Dine & Discover vouchers whilst visiting the North Coast.



Staffing Challenges For The Hospitality Industry Recognised

Tourism Accommodation Australia (TAA) and the Australian Hotels Association (AHA) are shining a light on the acute skills shortages in the hospitality industry, exacerbated by COVID-19 restrictions on international travel impacting the flow of skilled staff into Australia.

They told the Federal Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Migration that accommodation hotels in Sydney's CBD stopped selling rooms over Easter due to the shortage, and in some regional areas hoteliers are doing all they can to "beg, borrow or steal" chefs and cooks.

Few local workers want to take on the jobs and this combined with the lack of international

students, working holiday makers and temporary visa holders means job applications received have been down more than 50% on last year in some places. A recent AHA survey saw 73% of respondents report their business as suffering due to the shortage of skilled workers with more than 66% needing chefs.

The AHA and TAA are calling for:

- Cooks and chefs to be added to the Priority Migration Skilled Occupation List 2
- Hospitality (including accommodation) to be listed as a critical sector for the purposes of the subclass 408 Temporary Activity Visa.
- International students working in hospitality to be permitted to work more than 40hrs per fortnight.
- WHM VISA holders working in tourism to be able to work for the same employer for more than six months in rural and remote areas of Australia.
- Enable pathways for permanency for temporary skilled workers currently in Australia.

[Read article.](#)

Free Hospitality Training At NSW Clubs

The NSW Government recently announced jobseekers across the state will have access to free hospitality training to address growing skills shortages in the regional hospitality industry.

A partnership between the NSW Government and Clubs NSW will be piloted in clubs across the Upper Hunter, giving unemployed locals an opportunity to reskill for a job in a club. Following the pilot in the Upper Hunter, the program will be rolled out to regional areas across the state, making it easier for jobseekers to find jobs in the future, keeping money in the local economy.

NSW Deputy Premier John Barilaro said COVID-19 had intensified an already-acute skills shortage for jobs, with local unemployment and a lack of overseas workers such as chefs, bar attendants and kitchenhands.

Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education Geoff Lee said the partnership with Clubs NSW will not only help train locals but match them to hospitality jobs.

Read [Media Release](#).

NSW Takes Steps To Modernise Protections Through Heritage Act Review

The NSW Government has undertaken the first steps to review and modernise [NSW Heritage legislation](#). The review is designed to make it easier, more affordable, and more desirable to own a State significant heritage property.

Community members are encouraged to have their say on the [discussion paper and proposed reforms](#).

Destination NSW Appoints General Manager Consumer Marketing

Destination NSW has appointed Ms Kathryn Illy to the role of General Manager Consumer Marketing, effective 10 May 2021.

Ms Illy joins Destination NSW from PwC Australia where she was Director of Brand and Marketing, responsible for leading the organisation's national brand and marketing strategy. Prior to PwC, Ms Illy led the development and delivery of brand and marketing programs for several financial services organisations including Macquarie Group, Kessler Financial Services Australia and CommSec.

Mid-Week Is The New Weekend In NSW National Parks

Environment Minister Matt Kean recently announced the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service is launching a special offer making mid-week trips the new weekend in the NSW wilderness. It is aimed at encouraging mid-week visitors and lessening the pressure of high demand in some parks on some weekends.

Some of the popular locations where there is expected to be high demand include pitching a tent at either [Sheepstation Creek campground](#) among World-Heritage listed rainforest on the far north coast, or beside a flowing river at [Gloucester River campground](#) at Barrington Tops. Alternatively, for an upgraded option, visitors can sleep perched on one of NSW's most sought-after headlands at Cape Byron's [Assistant Lighthouse Keepers' Cottages](#).

[Discover the full list of participating campgrounds and accommodation](#). Visitors can use the promotional code MIDWEEK at nationalparks.nsw.gov.au.

Read [Media Release](#).

Calls For Locations Of Next Underwater Oasis Off NSW Coast

Minister for Agriculture Adam Marshall this week opened public Expressions of Interest for the locations of new Offshore Artificial Reefs to be deployed off the State's coastline.

Mr Marshall said: "Offshore Artificial Reefs are remarkable; once they become established they create a vibrant home which is truly an underwater oasis for marine life. Already we have eight of these million-dollar structures deployed off the NSW coastline, from Tweed Heads all the way down to Merimbula and I am very excited to see EOIs open for more reefs in our waters. Their innovative designs encourage a wide diversity of marine growth for fish to flourish in, which provides significant ecological and economic benefits."

[Nominate locations for the next Offshore Artificial Reef](#), before 17 June 2021 and find more information on [Offshore Artificial Reefs in NSW](#).

Industry Insights

February 2021 DNSW Westpac Tourism Monitor

February reporting for the [DNSW Westpac Tourism Expenditure Monitor](#) is now available, highlights include:

- Visitor volumes, transactions and expenditure were up 17%, 24% and 20% respectively across Regional NSW comparing February 2020 & February 2021. Variances in results would have been impacted by the bushfires and drought NSW was experiencing in early 2020, whilst in February 2021 the first public COVID vaccines became available in Australia, border restrictions were further eased, and the first "dine and discover" vouchers become available.
- All Destination Networks experienced declines in visitor volumes, transactions and expenditure between January and February 2021 – as people returned to work and school after the summer holiday period. In contrast Sydney saw a slight increase in visitor volumes, transactions and expenditure between January and February 2021 (up around 12% across each metric), yet were still significantly below February 2020 levels of visitor volume and spends.

New Heat Map Shows Areas Hardest Hit By Drop In Tourism

A new heat map, compiled by Stafford Strategy for the Tourism & Transport Forum shows Australia is still reeling from a 40+ percent drop in tourism.

Read [more here](#).

Industry Development And Other Opportunities

Local Government NSW Destination And Visitor Economy Conference

The Local Government NSW (LGNSW) [Destination and Visitor Economy Conference](#) will be held from 26 - 28 May 2021 in Port Macquarie where futurist Craig Rispin and Destination NSW CEO Steve Cox will share insights into what makes for an effective destination strategy.

Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Conference

Accessible and inclusive travel is estimated to be growing 3 times faster than the rest of the tourism industry. Learn more at the [Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Conference](#) in the Asia-Pacific — hosted online each Thursday in May.

- Hear from industry leaders, destination marketing organisations, and trailblazers in the community of travellers with disabilities.
- Learn how to attract more than 20% of the tourism market to help your business recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The event includes: On-demand recordings, accessible content with transcripts and captions, group ticket discounts.
- Opening keynote with Simon Darcy (Professor, UTS), John O'Sullivan (previously GM Tourism Australia) and Ivor Ambrose (European Network for Accessible Tourism).
- Masterclasses: First steps to make your business accessible & inclusive, including people with accessibility needs both as employees and as guests in a hotel, and more.
- Concluding keynote on the UN World Tourism Organization vision for accessible & inclusive tourism.

[Marketing Officer Role – MidCoast Council](#)

Are you passionate about tourism and have extensive digital and business marketing experience? This is an exciting opportunity to be involved in marketing the beautiful Mid North Coast region, where the leaves touch the waters from the mountains to the sea. This position sits within the Growth Economic Development and Tourism section and is responsible for the effective delivery and support of the MidCoast Council Destination Marketing, Destination Management & Destination Services activities, under the Council's Barrington Coast tourism brand.

For questions relating to the position requirements please contact [Sharon Bultitude](#), Destination Management Coordinator phone 02 7955 7466.

New South Wales Tourism Vs Destination NSW

Please be advised that [New South Wales Tourism - Events Australia](#) has **NO** affiliation with Destination NSW. If you have received an invoice, request for registration or email from any of these companies, they are not acting on behalf of Destination NSW and we recommend you disregard them. Please [click here](#) for a formal clarification from Destination NSW.

Funding And Other Opportunities

NSW Tourism Support Package

In case you missed it, the New South Wales visitor economy will get a boost through two new industry support and marketing programs.

The programs are part of the NSW Government's [Tourism Support Package](#) and include:

- * [\\$1.5 million for Regional Conferencing](#) to include an additional round of the Regional Business Event Development Fund
 - * [\\$1 million Tourism Industry Marketing Support package](#) – grants program: Destination NSW will match dollar-for-dollar for operators, local councils and tourism associations to deliver marketing activities to promote visitor experiences, attractions, tours and accommodation. Applications close 13 May 2021.
 - * [\\$4 million Kickstart 2021 Sydney Business Events Fund](#) (available to drive Business Events across Greater Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong).
- Read [Media Release](#).

\$5 Million Performing Arts Boost For Regions

The Commonwealth Government is investing an extra \$5 million to support performing arts touring in regional and remote communities as they rebound from the effects of COVID-19. The [Playing Australia Regional Recovery Investment 2021](#), through the Australia Council, will provide extra funding for performing arts organisations that have already been awarded grants under previous rounds of the Playing Australia Program and were heavily disrupted by the pandemic. The additional funding will support the viability of their regional and remote touring projects.

Applications for this round close on 1 June 2021, followed by the next round closing on 12 October 2021.

[Community Building Partnerships Program](#)

Provides funding for infrastructure projects, including vehicles and equipment, that deliver positive social, environmental, and recreational outcomes while promoting community participation, inclusion and cohesion. Incorporated not-for-profit community organisations and local councils are eligible to apply.

Closes 14 May 2021

[Tackling Tough Times Together](#)

Helps communities access the resources they need to support one another through the ongoing effects of the drought.

Closes 24 May 2021.

[Red Cross NSW Flood Grants](#)

Provides grants for people whose primary place of residence has been destroyed or made uninhabitable as a result of the March 2021 floods in NSW. The grant will consist of a \$1,000 payment per household that may contribute towards rent or temporary accommodation due to people being unable to return to their primary place of residence, and to meet basic, urgent needs, such as food, clothes, bedding or personal items. The grants will remain open until all available funds are exhausted, so we encourage you to apply as soon as possible.

North Coast Product And Experience Development

[Guided Tours At Copeland Tops Restart](#)

NPWS are pleased to announce that their range of guided tours at Copeland Tops State Conservation Area have recommenced.

[The Fig Tree Functions & Garden Restaurant – Iluka](#)

Club Iluka, also known as Iluka Bowls Club, has an exciting new dining space, Figtree Functions and Garden Restaurant. Set amongst the backdrop of the club's beautiful garden area, the new restaurant has been welcomed by the iconic resident Benjamin Fig Tree and the classic Aussie dishes all good clubs are famous for.

[Rob's Transport – Ballina](#)

Rob's Transport Ballina is located at Lennox Head, servicing Ballina, Byron, Yamba, Casino and transfers to the Gold Coast. As lifetime locals drivers are happy to share their local area knowledge with passengers during their transfers which are in eco-friendly hybrid vehicles that offer smooth, comfortable and quiet private rides for the discerning passenger. Available for airport transfers, door to door services, festivals, parties and events.

[The Wisdom Of The Horse – The Tweed](#)

Unique team building activity with horses to learn about trust, communication and relationships. Offsite team building activity for 6-30 delegates targeting the business events market in Tweed and beyond.

[Cabarita Spirits](#)

There's a new rum distillery in town! Cabarita Spirits are producing handcrafted Single Origin Rum called Soltera Rum. Founder and distiller Keri Algar has a wandering spirit and is an ideal candidate if you wish to profile women in tourism. While there is no cellar door, you can find Soltera Rum in popular local bars and wine shops such as The Burrow & Emmanuel's Wine Shop.

[Garden Of Light Tours – Tyalgum](#)

The spectacular Garden of Light tours return this Autumn in Tyalgum. Garden tours of this beautiful property spread over 25 acres that has been 18 years in the making are offered in association with Flutterbies Cottage Café where guests may enjoy a Devonshire Tea or Champagne two course lunch or garden picnic. Package prices from \$45 per person. Tours commence Tuesday 11 May.

[Little Turkey – Port Macquarie](#)

New local Turkish cuisine restaurant located at the marina in Port Macquarie. Focusing on Gozleme and Turkish breakfast, Little Turkey offers unique outdoor dining in a great location. Opened mid-April 2021 and is domestic focused.

[Level Up – Port Macquarie](#)

Level Up is a new nightclub and cocktail dumpling bar located in Port Macquarie providing

dumplings and cocktails and then after 9pm transforms to a night club. This is an 18+ venue at all times.

[Skate And Create – Woolgoolga](#)

Indoor skate park and art studio in Woolgoolga offering skateboard lessons, sessions and art-making workshops for all.

[Critters Distillery Tours – Woolgoolga](#)

Critters Distillery are so excited to be offering a unique artisan vodka experience where visitors see how the distillery operates, meet the head distiller and sample a range of specifically crafted vodka cocktail samples paired with an Australian antipasto grazing plate all served by your very own vodka bartender.

[Ivory Waterside And Marina – Tweed Heads](#)

Previously known as the Ivory Tavern, the Ivory has received a makeover with new furnishings, upgraded function area and more. The waterfront venue boasts 180 degree views of the Tweed River for all day dining and a 32 berth marina including pontoon boat hire.

[Lola Dining – Ballina](#)

Lola is an intimate open-kitchen restaurant reflecting the European heritage of its chefs and celebrates the connection between food and people, and blend this with creativity, passion and fun to create a unique dining experience. The menu boasts unique flavours and menu items and brings a new type of dining to Ballina.

[Ulmarra Food Co](#)

The quiet little town of Ulmarra, right on the Clarence River, has added another string to its bow with the addition of a new café and retail store. Ulmarra Food Co is talk of the town with its homemade pies, famous Yamba Ice-cream and a shop full of local produce and products. Throw in some live music on Sundays and it sounds like a perfect end to the weekend.

North Coast In The News

Aussie Ark Star Power - Barrington Wildlife Sanctuary

[Aussie Ark](#) welcomed Zac Efron and Darin Olien who are currently in Australia filming for Down to Earth with Zac Efron season 2. The two Americans helped return two Tasmanian devils, Manu and Padfoot, back to the wild in the **[Barrington Wildlife Sanctuary](#)**, a part of Aussie Ark.

In this new season, actor Zac Efron travels around Australia with wellness expert Darin Olien in search of healthy, sustainable ways to live. So Barrington Tops will be seen by millions worldwide on the Netflix series.

Channel 10's **[The Living Room](#)** star Dr Chris Brown has also recently helped release some Tasmanian Devils back into the wild at Aussie Ark's Barrington Wildlife Sanctuary.



The Coffs Coast Shines For Kids

In [Qantas Insider](#) this month, the many kid-friendly options of the Coffs Coast were featured including [TreeTop Adventure Park](#), the many activities of the [Big Banana Fun Park](#), [Solitary Islands Aquarium](#) along with [Dorrigo National Park](#), the [Butterfly House](#) and many more.

The North Coast On TVNZ Breakfast Show

What better time for NSW to feature across TVNZ Breakfast broadcast, than the week the two way Trans-Tasman travel commences. The broadcast integration, in partnership with Tourism Australia, includes three days of live weather broadcast on NZ's leading breakfast program from Sydney and NSW.

NSW led the week, which is themed as an "Aussie Adventure", with a live broadcast from Sydney Harbour (Monday 19 April), Blue Mountains (Tuesday 20 April) and Bondi Beach (Wednesday 21 April), as well as incorporating other destinations and experiences showcased through pre-recorded feature packages including hitting the surf with In2Surf and a SUP adventure with Watersports Guru in the Tweed Region.

The Tweed In 7 Getaways For people Who Love Food Article

The Tweed featured in this story "[7 Getaways for people who love food](#)" in [Escape.com.au](#) and their affiliates last weekend. With winning restaurants like [Paper Daisy](#), [Pipit](#) and [Potager](#), what's not to like.

The Gorge, Clarence River On The ABC's Hidden Gems

This short, beautiful film by the ABC explains the dramatic creation stories of [The Gorge](#).



North Coast Events

To aid in your planning, please note upcoming events across the region.

Casino Beef Week Festival Is Back With A Bang!

Following a challenging 12 months, the countdown to the ever-popular [Casino Beef Week Festival](#) has begun.

A COVID-safe festival will run from Saturday 22 May to Tuesday 1 June 2021 and will feature many of the regular favourite events including:

- Beef Week Opening Ball and Queen Crowning
- Breakfast with the Butchers
- Beef Week Cup horse and greyhound races
- Beef Week Saturday, including the unique led steer and stud cattle competitions around the Mafeking Lamp roundabout, as well as markets, amusement rides and wood chopping
- Celebration of Fashion
- Rural Ladies High Tea
- Busking championships
- Mr Beef
- Rodeo
- Art exhibition
- Dot Robson Memorial Craft Market

With major sponsors the Casino Food Co-op and Richmond Valley Council, as well as the many other festival supporters, again backing Australia's longest-running community festival, the Beef Week Festival Committee is thrilled the Casino Beef Week Festival 2021 is going ahead.

Richmond Valley Council's [Destination Officer Navanka Fletcher](#) is the go to contact for sponsors and event stakeholders.

Read [Media Release](#).

[Northern Rivers Harvest Food Trail](#) - 1-2 May 2021

[Nimbin Mardi Grass](#) - Nimbin 30 April - 2 May 2021

[Grafton to Inverell Cycle Classic](#) - 8 May 2021

[Jack McCoy Surf Talk and Jam](#) - Lennox Head 8 May 2021

[Festival of New Thinking](#) - Coffs Harbour 17 May 2021

[Kingscliff Triathlon](#) - Kingscliff 23 May 2021

[Next Exit Festival](#) - Port Macquarie 22 May 2021

[Art in the Paddock](#) - Upper Clarence Valley 6 June 2021

[Clarence Valley Camp Oven Festival](#) - Nymboida 11-14 June 2021

[Evans Head Fishing Classic](#) - Evans Head 25 June - 2 July 2021

[Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival](#) - Bellingen 11-14 June 2021

COVID-19 Resource Centre

The DNC [COVID-19 Resource Centre](#) makes it easy to access relevant information and find links to appropriate Government and other resources.

Destination North Coast

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