

Northern Rivers Rail Trail Product & Experience Development Mentoring Program

Do you need some advice on how to bring your Northern Rivers Rail Trail product or experience to life? Or are you keen to explore how your current business can take advantage of the opportunities the trail will bring to the North Coast?

Given it's full steam ahead for the Tweed and Casino to Lismore sections of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail there is a need for North Coast tourism businesses to be 'Rail Trail ready' and in the best position to take advantage of new opportunities to create exceptional nature-based and recreation experiences.

The **Northern Rivers Rail Trail Product & Experience Development Mentoring Program** is designed to address local business needs now, and down the track (pardon the pun), to ensure local operators understand the potential opportunities associated with the rail trail.

What are the benefits?

The program is suitable for tourism businesses interested in developing a concept or idea for a new rail trail focused product or experience. It is also suitable for existing operators interested in learning how they can leverage the trail and the opportunities it will bring to the region. The program is designed to support individual businesses to gain a better understanding of best practice in rail trail experience development. Benefits of the program include:

- Up to 3 hours of one-on-one mentoring support with a business and tourism mentor, face to face and/or via phone or Zoom call
- Guided learning and resources
- An online group session to encourage collaboration with other businesses
- Flexible hours for mentoring sessions to work around running your business.

The program runs from February 2022 to April 2022.

Who is eligible?

Applications are open to North Coast tourism businesses that are currently operating or are in the start-up phase with a registered ABN. This includes businesses from the Northern Rivers including LGAs: Tweed, Byron, Ballina, Lismore, Richmond Valley and Kyogle.

Is there a cost to participate?

This program is **free of charge**, fully funded by The Australian Government and Destination North Coast. This program will be delivered by local business and tourism mentors, Wray Sustainable Tourism Research and Planning.



Program Format

| Phase | Format | Objective |
|-------|--|---|
| 1 | Engagement Letter | Successful participants will receive an Engagement Letter that outlines how the program will work and get you set up for a successful mentoring experience. |
| 2 | Rail Trail Ready Business Health Check | This online self-assessment is designed to identify your business strengths and weaknesses and areas of focus to work on with your business mentor. |
| 3 | Mentor Match | The team at Wray Sustainable Tourism Research and Planning will assess your health check and match you with an experienced tourism mentor. |
| 4 | One-on-One Mentoring | Each participant will receive individual mentoring support including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 1.5 hour Group Introduction Session (via zoom) to introduce the mentors and participating businesses • 3 hours one-on-one mentoring • Working with your mentor to complete a Rail Trail Ready Business Action Plan to identify short and long-term goals. Participants will be required to complete actions/activities outside of mentoring sessions. |
| 5 | Learning and Resources | Participants will follow a guided learning program that comprises resources developed to introduce good practices for successful rail trail product and experience development these include: case studies, relevant research, information about licences and permissions, advice on business planning and online marketing, and ways to connect with other stakeholders and tourism industry partners to activate business concepts. |
| 6 | Evaluation | After the Program is complete, participants will complete a 10-minute exit interview to determine their future business development support needs. |

How do I apply?

To apply, complete the online Expressions of Interest Application form via our program website

dncsw.com/northern-rivers-rail-trail-project/

Applications Open: Wednesday 1st December 2021

Applications Close: COB Thursday 10th February 2022

Need more information?

For program information check out our [program website](#).

Or contact Sarah Elphinstone, Project Manager at Destination North Coast

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