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## North Coast News & Views No. 156

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### Gate Opens To New Agritourism Opportunities

The NSW Government's final agritourism policy has come into effect, making it simpler and easier for farmers to start and operate agritourism businesses across the state.

Farmers can now diversify their income by including agritourism experiences through fast-tracked, or without, planning approvals.

The NSW Government will work with councils to monitor the policy and how it's operating, and make sure it's balancing the needs of farmers and the community.

[Find more information here](#) and read [media release](#).

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### Statewide Campaign To Kickstart Careers In Hospitality

The NSW Government has launched a major recruitment campaign to help ease staff shortages across the hospitality industry.

The five-week *Kickstart Your Career in Hospitality* campaign has been designed in partnership with ClubsNSW, Australian Hotels Association and NSW Restaurant and Caterers Association to showcase the industry and highlight the range of long-term career options available throughout the sector.

The service will streamline application processes and assist businesses and local councils to navigate the liquor licensing, planning and regulatory changes introduced through the 24-Hour Economy reforms.

[Find more information here](#) and read [media release](#).

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### Macleay Valley On Track For \$4.8 Million Coastal Views

An epic walk and kayaking adventure hugging the gorgeous Macleay Valley coastline from Point Plomer to Grassy Head is in the works with funding secured for a unique coastal experience.

Kempsey Shire Council and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service have secured \$3,355,000 from the NSW Government's Regional Tourism Activation Fund to deliver the Five Headlands Coastal Experience. Council and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service will also fund the project contributing \$850,000 and \$574,500, respectively.

The Five Headlands Coastal Experience will connect four of the Macleay Valley Coast's most spectacular national parks and link five breathtaking headlands showcasing the region's natural beauty and outstanding scenery.

The funding dedicated to Stage One of the project will see existing walking trails along the coastline linked up. Council will look to secure further funding for the next stage that will develop the kayaking adventure into the coastal experience.

Read [media release](#).



## \$2.5 Million Boost For NSW Tourism Projects

The NSW Government is investing \$2.5 million to bolster the tourism sector across the State to ensure the continued recovery of the visitor economy.

Wildlife encounters, food and wine activities as well as wellness retreats are among 18 projects that will receive grants of between \$80,000 and \$150,000 via the Experience Development Fund.

Congratulations to [the Frogarium](#) in Coffs Harbour who received \$150,000 for the development of a unique visitor facility and to provide guided tours of frog fauna and freshwater wildlife.

Read [media release](#).

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## Creating Real Inclusion In The Tourism Industry



**Creating real inclusion**

► A call to arms to the tourism industry in support of people with disability

Image description: Two people sitting on a chair looking out at the view.  
Image credit: Mode Imagery for Getaboutable and Visit Canberra.

Authors:  
Giovanna Lever  
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Discussion Paper  
Prepared By:

**SPARROWLY GROUP**

5th Edition

Image description:  
Two sparrows flying side by side with the words Sparrowly Group underneath  
Image credit:  
Sparrowly Group

In Australia, 1 in 5 people have some form of disability. Domestic and international visitation by people with disability contributes \$10.8 billion to the Australian economy, more than that of the Chinese inbound market of \$10.4 billion. Prior to the COVID pandemic, this market was predicted to reach 25% of total tourism spend by 2020. Until international visitation returns to pre-pandemic levels and updated research is undertaken, these numbers remain the guideposts for industry.

**Sparrowly Group** are committed to the ongoing research and advocacy in the accessible tourism sector and release an annual research paper on this topic. Their fifth edition builds upon previous editions by recognising how far the industry has come. It acknowledges the challenges and opportunities, while celebrating progress made so far. It provides practical advice and support resources for the industry so that new changes can be made today.

[Read the research paper here.](#)

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## The Role Of Events In The Visitor Economy - Austrade Report

Austrade's [Opportunities for the Visitor Economy Report](#) (June 2021) found events have benefits beyond direct revenue. These may include:

- driving incremental trips and spend to nearby destinations
- creating a positive reputation for a destination and word-of-mouth marketing
- stimulating and underwriting infrastructure investment
- building business relationships and generating new business opportunities.

The report also found that overall, those attending an event spend about twice as much per night as holiday visitors. For example, those arriving from overseas for a business event in 2019 spent on average \$4,800 during their whole trip, 83% higher than a holiday maker's \$2,600 (Source: Austrade, Opportunities for the Visitor Economy, June 2021).

Vivid, for example, injected \$119 million into the NSW economy.

The long-term strategy for Australia's visitor economy, [THRIVE 2030](#), includes specific reference to sporting, artistic, cultural, and business events as they support high-yield and high revenue visitation. States, territories, and industry are encouraged to schedule and market events collaboratively to make the most of regional dispersal and repeat visitation. With major global events such as Sydney WorldPride 2023 on the horizon, it's an exciting time for the visitor economy..

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## Skills Agreement For 120,000 Fee-Free TAFE And VET Places

The Australian and NSW Governments have signed a landmark 12-month Skills Agreement to address the current skills shortage and deliver fee-free TAFE and more vocational education places for the people of NSW.

The \$319 million agreement will deliver a significant boost to the NSW skills and training sector providing immediate support through approximately 120,000 fee-free TAFE and vocational education and training (VET) places in 2023. The course list will see approximately 5,000 places in hospitality and tourism.

The Agreement will increase opportunities and workforce participation of priority groups, including First Nations Australians, young people (17-24), people out of work or receiving income support, unpaid carers, women undertaking study in non-traditional fields, people with disability and certain categories of visa holders.

Read [media release.](#)

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## Destination NSW Updates, Awards and Recognition

The NSW visitor economy is set to receive a \$142 million boost over summer through 280,000 additional inbound airline seats secured through the [NSW Government's Aviation Attraction Fund](#) which is managed by Destination NSW.

New increased capacity will peak between December and February on routes between Sydney and Abu Dhabi, Auckland, Christchurch, Colombo, Doha, Dubai, Incheon, Los Angeles, Queenstown, Singapore, Tokyo, Vancouver and Wellington capitalising on Sydney's appeal as a summer destination.

NSW has been recognised as the events capital of Australia, with [Vivid Sydney](#), proudly owned, managed and produced by Destination NSW, claiming the [Best Public Event \(National\)](#) accolade at the 2022 Australian Event Awards.



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## Online Bookings - Restrictions On Tourism And Accommodation Providers Setting Prices

Online booking platforms have become important sources of bookings for many tourism and accommodation providers. The Federal Government will commence consultation to understand if online booking platforms are restricting the ability of tourism and accommodation providers to set their own prices, and to identify if any action is required to address this.

This consultation seeks feedback on the use of price parity clauses and similar restrictions by online accommodation booking platforms in Australia. Consultation will assist the Government to: understand the extent to which price parity clauses or similar practices are being used by online booking platforms, and any impact this is having on the ability of Australian tourism and accommodation providers to set their own prices when guests contact them to book, and identify if any action, including legislative change, is required to address this.

Australian accommodation and tourism providers, including small businesses, and online booking platforms are invited to [respond via submission or survey](#) before **6 January 2023**.

[Find more information here](#) and read [media release](#).

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## New Vision For Regional NSW

The NSW Government has unveiled a new strategy to ensure regional NSW remains the best place to visit, live, work, play and raise a family. [Our Vision for Regional Communities](#) is backed by a three-year action plan.

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## AirAsia flights resume

AirAsia X will be recommencing services between Kuala Lumpur and the Gold Coast with the first flight due to arrive on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

AirAsia X will be operating their A330 aircraft 3 times per week on the below schedule and these aircraft will have 377 inbound seats per flight including both Economy and Premium Economy seating. This injection of capacity delivers almost 59,000 inbound seats per annum from Malaysia direct to the Gold Coast, perfect for visiting the North Coast NSW. Further, this service will be the only aviation connection to Malaysia for Queensland from the end of March 2023 onwards continuing to provide an important business and export connection for the state to Malaysia and beyond.

Read [media release](#).

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## Tourism Industry Insights

### New Research Maps The Future Traveller

Tourism Australia has launched its most comprehensive map of global demand to date in the Future of Demand report and factsheets including:

- Experience fact sheets for 143 individual experiences, e.g. ecotourism, coach tours, Indigenous guided tours, viewing wildlife in their natural environment.
- Market snapshots, providing an overview of the interest in experiences within each of 20 markets.
- A detailed longform report summarising key findings and themes, including insights into our 3 deep-dive areas of sustainability, Indigenous and accessible.
- And an introductory guide explaining what's available and how to interpret the results.

[Find more information here](#).

### Domestic Tourism Spending Surges

Australians are spending more on domestic tourism than before the pandemic, with \$10.1 billion flowing into the industry in October according to a new monthly tourism report released by [Tourism and Transport Forum](#) (TTF). The report shows visitor economy spending surged to \$2.1 billion in NSW, with three destinations in the top 10: Sydney, North Coast and South Coast. The greatest spend in October was by Australians travelling within their own state, with intrastate domestic travel 14 per cent above pre-COVID-19 levels at \$6.2 billion.

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## Around The Region

### Lismore Urban Sports Precinct

A new sports precinct, including a 2300sqm skate park, in the Lismore CBD has received \$3.9 million in funding from the State Government's Multi-Sport Community Facility Fund.

The 'Lismore Urban Sports Precinct' will deliver skateboarding, roller skating, BMX, scootering and sport climbing infrastructure as well as associated recreational infrastructure. The Urban Sports Precinct will replace Lismore's old skate park near the river which reach the end of its life and is no longer safe. The community can [give feedback on the current concept designs](#).

### NPWS Macleay Coast Destination Project - Draft Master Plan

A draft master plan has been developed for the visitor precincts in [Arakoon National Park](#) and Smoky Cape in [Hat Head National Park](#) which will guide upgrades to visitor infrastructure within the parks. The planned visitor infrastructure improvements aim to revitalise and significantly improve existing infrastructure to meet current customer expectations, boost the regional visitor economy and contribute to community wellbeing. The master plan also proposes to create a stunning coastal walk between the Trial Bay and Smoky Cape precincts.

The [Master Plan is on public exhibition](#) until 10 January 2023 for interested stakeholders to have your say.

NPWS are holding an 'Open House' this Saturday 10 December) where stakeholders can have their say at the Little Bay picnic area, end of Carri Street, Arakoon National Park. This will be an informal drop-in session where members of the project team will be available to answer questions and take feedback on the plan.

### InFocus Photo Competition - Clarence Valley

From the river to the sea, Clarence Valley Council invite submissions to their [InFocus Photo Competition](#) for a chance to win \$500 and have your photos published in the Plunge festival program.

This theme of this year's competition and exhibition is "Our Identity, Our Clarence Valley". What are the people and places that make the region unique?

Entry is free for the chance to win a share of the total prize pool of \$2200 with 4 categories and one additional prize to be awarded to a fifth photo selected from all entries submitted for the cover of the [2022 Plunge Art & Culture festival guide](#).

### Boost to Lismore - Parks & Leisure Australia NSW/ACT Regional Conference 2022

[Parks and Leisure Australia NSW/ACT](#) were pleased to be able to conduct their regional conference in Lismore in 2022. This was the first conference to be held in Lismore post the floods; held over two and a half days with over one hundred delegates, it provided the opportunity for delegates to experience the region and delivered a much needed economic boost to the community.

A key outcome of the conference is the [Lismore Legacy Project](#). This is a project to utilise the skills and expertise of the members to give back to the Lismore community. The project focuses on restoring and revitalising a key park in east Lismore called Wade Park.

This is a great example of the positive impact Business Events and Conferencing delivers to the North Coast, our communities and the visitor economy.

### Tweed Named Climate Change Leader

[Tweed Shire Council](#) has been recognised by the Climate Disclosure Platform (CDP) as one of 122 cities across the globe for taking bold leadership on environmental action and transparency, despite the pressures of a challenging global economic situation.

[The Tweed](#) was also featured in a recent edition of Escape published in Melbourne's Herald Sun, Adelaide Advertiser, Brisbane's Sunday Mail and The Sunday Telegraph in Sydney highlighting "The Healing Power of Nature" showcasing Watersports Guru. This coverage was a direct result of the Tweed Tourism Co's media family during the Wellness Tourism Summit!

### Urban List's Most Beautiful Places To Visit In NSW

Urban List's [most beautiful places to visit in NSW](#) showcases Bellingen, Tuncurry and Lord Howe Island. We couldn't agree more.

### National Restaurant & Catering Awards 2022

[Mavis's Kitchen](#) in Uki won GOLD for the Regional NSW Tourism Restaurant Award at last week's [National Restaurant and Catering Awards 2022](#) which is an amazing result. Well done to the team at Mavis' for this outstanding result on the national stage.

Congratulations also to [Forest, Byron Bay](#) who were awarded SILVER for Regional NSW in the Contemporary Australian Restaurant - Formal Category.

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## **Industry Development And Other Opportunities**

### **DNSW Online Inbound Strategy Workshop**

Destination NSW's NSW First Program [Online Inbound Strategy Workshop](#) will take place on **21 February 2023** for businesses from across NSW to attend. The workshop is designed to assist visitor economy businesses, including tours, attractions and accommodation providers, to prepare to sell to international travellers through the inbound distribution system.

### **Share Your Industry Experience In The VET Sector**

The Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour and Bellingen districts need people with industry experience or qualifications in local skill shortage areas to deliver training and assessment services in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. This initiative is part of strengthening the capacity of the VET sector here in the region.

To support this initiative, the Industry Training Hub - Grafton/Coffs and Pinnacle Safety and Training are offering up to 20 fully funded places in the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40116), which is the qualification required to deliver these services. This course covers training design, training delivery and assessment activities.

This course will be delivered in Grafton (a similar option is also available in Coffs Harbour) and is entirely funded by the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

This course is fee free for eligible applicants. **Applications close 14 December 2022.**

[Find more information here.](#)

### **Register For Tourism Australia's Next Webinar**

Tourism Australia's final Industry Webinar for the year will be held on at 11am, 9 December 2022 and will include guests Elissa Keenan, CEO, Eco-Tourism Australia to talk about the new Strive 4 Sustainability Scorecard partnership; Andrew Hogg, Executive General Manager, Aviation and Eastern Markets to give an update on China and aviation; and Eva Seller, Regional General Manager for Continental Europe, to talk about some emerging opportunities in that part of the world. You can [register to attend the webinar here.](#)

### **Visitor Information Centre Training Academy**

Designed to support new and existing Australian visitor centre managers, TRA's VIC Academy builds on quality management, industry development, and stakeholder advice demonstrated by the Company through a series of visitor service engagements since 2002.

[Find more information here.](#)

### **National Banksia Sustainability Awards**

Tourism Businesses are encouraged to enter the 'Sustainable Tourism Award' category in this year's National Banksia Sustainability Awards. The 'Sustainable Tourism Award' recognises outstanding achievements by an organisation or organisations in collaboration in championing the protection, conservation, and regeneration of the environment, nurturing and supporting the economic and physical wellbeing of community and culture, both Indigenous and local. **Entries close on 13 December 2022.** National winners will be announced in March 2023. For more information about the awards, including how to enter, visit the [Banksia Foundation website.](#)

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## Funding And Other Opportunities

### **REMINDER: Regional Investment Activation Fund**

The NSW Government's \$110 million Regional Investment Activation Fund will make regional NSW the location of choice for investors, facilitating new private sector investment to activate the potential of priority precincts and industries. **Closes 31 December**.

### **Regional Small Business Support Program**

This program provides financial counselling and related services to small regional businesses facing hardship due to drought, the COVID-19 pandemic or the 2019-20 bushfires. **Closes 31 December 2022**.

### **Get NSW Active 2023**

Applications for Get NSW Active 2023 have opened with councils encouraged to apply. The third and final tranche of the 2022 Get NSW Active program will see \$77 million in funding delivered for 161 projects across 45 councils. Read the Grant Guidelines and apply via the Application Portal. **Closes January 2023**.

### **Peer-Based Harm Reduction At NSW Music Festivals - Expression Of Interest**

Organisations are invited to express their interest in offering peer-based harm reduction services at NSW music festivals subject to the Music Festivals Act 2019. Funding is available for up to 4 years, commencing in 2023. **Closes 27 January 2023**.

### **Playing Australia Project Investment**

The Playing Australia Regional Performing Arts Touring Fund provides individuals and organisations with funding to help them with the touring costs of taking a performing art show to regional and remote areas. **Closes 7 March 2023**.

### **Cultural Grants Program NSW**

This program provides funding to Aboriginal community organisations across NSW to celebrate Aboriginal culture and hold key cultural events and activities. **Closes 14 April 2023**.

### **Regional Filming Fund (RFF)**

The Regional Filming Fund offsets costs associated with shooting in regional areas of NSW. Regional NSW is defined as all areas in NSW outside the Sydney Metro area (excluding the ACT). **Ongoing**.

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## North Coast Product Development

### **Old Butchers Shop Ulmarra**

Ulmarra has long been known for its quirky shops, art, and good food. Adding to the scene is the [\*\*Old Butcher Shop Ulmarra\*\*](#), a new gift shop selling flowers, arts and crafts, local gifts, and lots of sweet treats.

### **Glide Time - Neranie Head, Myall Lakes**

[\*\*GlideTime\*\*](#) allows visitors to experience NSW's pristine waters in an eco-friendly way. Based out of Neranie in Myall Lakes National Park, experienced coaches teach people how to hydrofoil on the pristine calm waters of the lake.

### **Reef 'N Beyond - Lord Howe Island**

Lagoon taxis, sunset cruises and southern lagoon tours now offered by [\*\*Reef N Beyond\*\*](#) onboard the brand-new boat "Maddy G". This compliments their Pall's Pyramid and Outer Reef Ocean tours on their Reef'n Beyond state of the art [\*\*Eco Tour Vessel\*\*](#).

### **Ventura Hard Kombucha Wins Australia's Best Alternative Drink**

Tweed-based [\*\*Ventura Brewing's\*\*](#) Hard Kombucha has taken the top spot for Australia's best alternative alcoholic drink at the [\*\*Drink Easy Awards\*\*](#), a celebration of Australian drinks and the culture that surrounds brewing, distilling and fermenting.

Read [\*\*media release\*\*](#).

### **Positive Energy Adventures & Retreats**

The team at [\*\*Positive Energy Adventures & Retreats\*\*](#) facilitate walking retreats and adventures to bring people back to the simple joys of life whilst admiring and preserving the environment around them. Their fully guided walks are EcoPass certified and fully supported, meaning guests can truly disconnect from the rush of life and discover the natural beauty of the coastline between port Macquarie and Crescent Heads.

Check out (and share) their first [\*\*Women's Retreat\*\*](#) experience slated for 10 March 2023, in celebration of International Women's Day.



## **Apex Dining - Tweed Regional Gallery**

**Apex Dining** at the Tweed Regional Gallery is the brainchild of the operators behind 'Baked at Ancora' and features a combination of rustic French patisserie, modern café plates with a fresh and playful pan-Asian twist, all driven by the abundant local product that surrounds.

## **Tropical Fruit World**

Tropical Fruit World has launched a [new luxury private tour](#) including fruit tasting, native botanical experience, bottle of Bollinger and a private culinary experience with a dedicated tour guide travelling around the farm via private buggy.

## **Crystalbrook Byron Partners With Eco-Friendly Greenline Cleaning Products**

**Crystalbrook Byron**, part of Australia's largest independent sustainably-led five-star hospitality group, has partnered with Greenline Australia as their primary cleaning product supplier as part of an ongoing commitment to create a more sustainable environment for hotel guests and staff.

Read [media release](#).

## **Out of the Blue Adventures - Snorkel Tour**

Adding to their whale watching and river cruises, Out of The Blue Adventures have added a [Snorkelling Tour](#). Departing from Brunswick Heads and heading into the Cape Byron Marine Park to Julian rocks, guests get up close and personal with the diverse sea life that is found in this region from Wobbegongs to Manta Rays, hundreds of colourful fish species, Nurse Sharks, Dolphins, Sea Turtles and more.



## **Roam Gloucester**

Roam Gloucester is a new professional ride share and mini bus services based in Gloucester. Given there has not been a taxi service in Gloucester for almost 10 years so this is big news.

## **Barrington Bike Path**

The most exciting mountain bike park on the North Coast is now open being the only wilderness bike park in NSW. Purpose-built on a wild mountain near Gloucester, the park offers 370 metres of drop across black, blue and green trails, all gravity fed. It's set deep in the rainforest with breathtaking views across the Barrington River valley to world heritage Barrington Tops National Park. "The trails at Barrington Bike Park are a perfect mix of flowy, technical, and enjoyable tracks. Great for all riders from beginners up to pros. You feel like you're in another world, on the mountain surrounded by beautiful rainforest." (Ellie Smith, Australian National Downhill & Oceania Champion).

## **Operator Collaboration - Marine Adventures and Islander Cruises**

The North Bay Link: Lagoon Taxi service from Lagoon Beach to North Bay and back. Operated by [Marine Adventures](#) and [Islander Cruises](#) (collaboration) daily on request.

## **Eastern Airlines Scenic Flights**

During summer months, [Eastern Airlines](#) offers scenic flights around Lord Howe Island and Ball's Pyramid. The flights can be booked through Eastern Air directly or the local store [Abemama](#).

## **El Ocaso - Yamba**

New bar in Yamba open Thursday to Saturday nights offering Mediterranean-themed tapas and cocktails (the owners used to own and run Barbaresco in Angourie!)

## **Village Stays - Ulmarra**

Attached to the Coldstream Gallery in the heart of the historic river port of Ulmarra is this unique, private, self-contained apartment.

## **Woolgoolga Visitor Information Centre**

NSW AVIC welcomes Woolgoolga as a newly accredited Visitor Information Centre, proud to fly the yellow and blue flag for the Coffs Coast.

## **Grazie Papi - Coffs Harbour**

Delicious Italian straight out of Nonna's kitchen. Woodfired pizzas and pasta and fresh market seafood all served to perfection.

## **Camp Jordan - Port Macquarie**

Welcome to Camp Jordan, a boutique outdoor accommodation nestled on the quiet banks of the Hastings River in Port Macquarie, NSW.

Visitors have been enjoying the iconic Jordan's Boating Centre & Holiday Park situated on the banks of the beautiful Hastings River for over 50 years. Continuing to expand, offering campsites and cabins, Jordan's proved to be the ideal environment for family adventures and relaxed weekend getaways with BBQ boats and runabouts, paddle boarding and kayaking



After providing holiday makers with the perfect riverside location, Camp Jordan has been established with a variety of accommodation options including deluxe bell tents, self-contained cabins offering river views, renovated Airstream caravans and refurbished shipping containers. Each room is designed with rest and relaxation in mind with optimum adventure available at the doorstep.

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## North Coast Events

To aid your planning and to support local events, please note these upcoming events on the North Coast or find [all events on our website](#).

### BBL Sydney Sixers v Adelaide Strikers

To be held once again at the [C.ex Coffs International Stadium](#), Coffs Harbour is anticipating a big crowd, massive hits, and an electric atmosphere! Secure [tickets early](#) before they sell out. **17 January 2023**.

### Summer Salt - Coffs Harbour

A new music festival in a vibrant setting at Park Beach Reserve that will bring much loved Aussie artists together with exciting international acts for a stellar line-up featuring Julia & Angus Stone, Ben Harper, City and Colour, The Reubens, Middle Kids and Alex the Astronaut. **11 February 2023**.

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