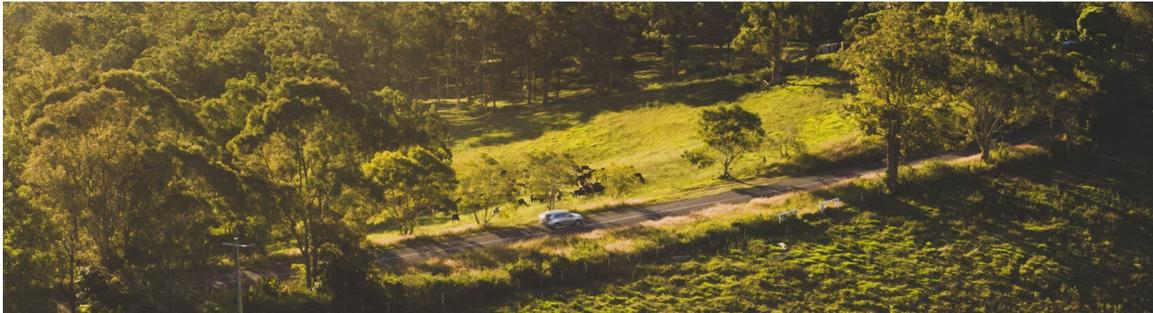


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North Coast News & Views No. 158

Regional Job Creation Fund Round 3

The Regional Job Creation Fund (RJCF) Round 3 provides opportunity for existing businesses to diversify into new markets and innovate in regional NSW. The \$100 million RJCF Round 3 will support existing regional NSW businesses, or those seeking to relocate to regional NSW as they adapt to technological change, meet evolving supply chain distribution demands and leverage their strengths to drive ongoing productivity and regional economic development.

Funded projects will create and maintain regional jobs, diversify regional economies, and provide skills, and training opportunities, including for young people, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander individuals and people with disability.

[Find more information here.](#)

Regional Tourism Activation Fund - Round Two Funding Recipients Announced

Destination North Coast are delighted to pass on our congratulations to the six very worthy North Coast projects who have been announced as recipients of funding from Round 2 of the [Regional Tourism Activation Fund](#) administered by the Department of Regional NSW.

Congratulations to:

- [Sharpes Beach Precinct Accessibility Upgrade](#) - Ballina Shire Council;
- [Urunga Boardwalk Upgrade Project](#) - Bellingen Shire Council;
- [Five Headlands Coastal Experience](#) - Stage One - Kempsey Shire Council;
- Suspended Boardwalk on Wallis Lake - MidCoast Council;

- Tacking Point Lighthouse Port Macquarie viewing platform and accessible boardwalk - Port Macquarie-Hastings Council; and
- Gumbaynggirr Aboriginal Keeping Place - Unkya Local Aboriginal Land Council, Nambucca Valley

We look forward to supporting these projects through to fruition.

[See the full list of project recipients here.](#)

Bonza Set For Takeoff

The Australian Government welcomed the entry of a new airline into the Australian market, with Bonza today being granted its Air Operator's Certificate (AOC) from the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) following a rigorous assessment process. This is a significant milestone for Australian aviation, marking the first new high-capacity entrant into the Australian market since the launch of Tiger Airways over 15 years ago.



With an initial base on the Sunshine Coast, Bonza will focus on regional routes that are currently underserved with plans for flights from both Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie. AOCs are required by all airlines that fly scheduled passenger services in Australia. [Read media release.](#)

Two More Artificial Reefs For NSW

The NSW Government has announced it will create artificial reefs in Coffs Harbour and Ballina. Minister for Agriculture Dugald Saunders said: "These latest two offshore reefs will bring the total deployed by this government to 13, spanning waters from Tweed Heads to Merimbula. The man-made reefs create the perfect marine environment for a range of fish species. They also provide a significant boost to our recreational fishers, who contribute \$3.4 billion to the NSW economy each year." [Read media release.](#)

Tourism Industry Insights

National Visitor Survey Results

The National Visitor Survey (NVS) results for [year ending September 2022](#) are now published. Domestic tourism continued to recover from pre-pandemic levels. In the year ending September 2022, domestic overnight spend rose 11% or \$8.4 billion to \$87.5 billion.

The NVS snapshot for the [month of October 2022](#) has also been released. Overall, Australian residents took 10 million overnight trips and spent \$11 billion in October 2022.

The National Workplace Initiative

The National Workplace Initiative provides a nationally consistent approach to workplace mental health. The [Mentally Healthy Workplaces and COVID-19: Emerging Issues](#) series provides organisations with expert insights and tips to address key challenges impacting workplace mental health. The guides also connect organisations to further sources of guidance and support.

The Accessible Tourism Opportunity - Austrade insight

Making your products or services more accessible to visitors can open new and valuable markets for your business according to [Austrade insights](#). The accessible travel community includes people with a disability, a long-term health condition, or mobility needs. It also includes their entire travel party.

Supporting tourism products and experiences that are accessible to people of all physical and cognitive capabilities, disabilities, age, and neurodiversity ensures consumer demand can be met. Accessibility increases opportunities for businesses.

Around The Region

Australian Street Art Awards National Finalists

Two of Greater Port Macquarie's favourite attractions have been named as finalists in the Australian Street Art Awards. They are the Hello Koalas Sculptures Trail, which recently took out Gold in the NSW Tourism Awards, and the Big Koala at the Guulabaa Tourism Precinct in the Cowarra State Forest, west of Port Macquarie. They are among nine public art installations from across NSW to make the shortlist. Winners announced 10 February 2023. [See the full list of finalists here.](#)



Reflections Holiday Parks Produces Visitor Guides

Reflections Holiday Parks has partnered with the talented team at CAPRA to showcase the amazing regions that their Parks are in with the Coffs Coast region first cab off the rank. The tailor-made, *Reflections Adventure Guide for the Coffs Coast Region* is available through the CAPRA App with the wider North Coast Collection just released. These digital guides are set to be a major 'go-to' resource for visitors to the regions of Reflection's parks.

Reflections are breaking new ground and leading the way with this digital guide being the first holiday travel brand and holiday park group to collaborate with CAPRA to enhance the guest and visitor experience in this way. Read [media release](#).

Byron Rail Cycleway

The long-awaited construction of a cycleway between Mullumbimby and Brunswick Heads has taken a significant step forward, with Byron Council selecting a preferred route and commencing the design investigation process.

The chosen Mullum to Bruns route, known as Option 1, will also take in Ocean Shores and surrounding areas. [Find more information here.](#)

The Best New Restaurants In NSW For A Summer Roadtrip

Congratulations to all the North Coast restaurants recently promoted as Best New Restaurants in NSW for a summer roadtrip. The following North Coast restaurants were listed:

- Belongil Beach Italian, Byron Bay
- Bistro Livi, Murwillumbah
- Capiche, East Ballina
- Osteria Fiume, Bellingen
- You Beauty, Bangalow

[See the full list here.](#)

10 Stunning Australian Holiday Homes For Families - Escape Magazine

Escape rounded up 10 of the best holiday houses for families that Australia has to offer with top of the list [The Beach Ranch](#), Angourie and coming in at number three, [Blue Water Motel Beach House](#), Kingscliff. [Read article.](#)

Karkalla Byron Bay - Critic's Choice Restaurant In Good Food Guide 2023.

Congratulations to the team at Karkalla for inclusion as a critic's choice restaurant in The Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide 2023. For the first time in the Guide's 40-year history, a critic's choice heart symbol has been awarded to select venues that are recognised for their meaningful and positive contribution to the state's food culture. [Karkalla Byron Bay](#) is one of those select venues!

To receive a critic's choice heart, the review team considers if the restaurant is worth making a trip across town, or perhaps a longer journey, to visit - regardless of whether it has been awarded a hat. Karkalla aims to connect guests to the rich First Nations culture through food.

Industry Development And Other Opportunities

Free Tourism Workshops: Inbound Strategy

With a critical mass of international visitors now returning to Australia it is the ideal time to find out how to attract international visitors to book your tour, attraction or accommodation at one of two upcoming Inbound Strategy Workshops, delivered by Destination NSW as part of its [NSW First Program](#) and supported by Destination North Coast.

These free, one-day workshops set out the tools and steps for tourism businesses to tailor products for different international visitor markets, make a plan to become export ready, and sell experiences to international visitors via online travel agents and traditional inbound travel trade.

These workshops present an amazing opportunity to work on your business rather than in it and to continue your business development journey.

Find more information and register at the workshop closest to you:

- [Coffs Harbour, Tuesday 14 February 2023](#)
- [Port Macquarie, Thursday 16 February 2023](#)



[Free Support Available To Help Hire, Recruit And Train Employees](#)

Did you know there is a free, government-funded employment service available to help your business? Through Workforce Australia you can access help to hire staff, support with trialling and training candidates, recruitment tips and advice, and more.

[Digital Masterclass: The Essential Small Business Workshop](#)

This brilliant workshop will help small business owners on the Coffs Coast kicking new goals in 2023. Whether you are a retailer, tourism, service or professional business, you will gain the skills and confidence to manage your established business or new start-up in the digital world. Register for this free, in-person workshop being held on **Tuesday 21 February, 10am-12pm**, [Sawtell Success Hub](#).

Aboriginal Customised Course In Cultural Tourism

TAFE NSW Ballina campus is delivering an Aboriginal Customised Course in Cultural Tourism. This course, on Bundjalung country, is designed as an enterprise development opportunity for Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Ranger Groups and Aboriginal communities/organisation to gain the skills to prepare and present your own cultural tour.

Certificate III Guiding (Cultural Tourism) - is delivered via Away from Base meaning if you live more than 90 minutes away from TAFE NSW, Ballina you may be eligible for Away from Base assistance to attend face to face training via the [AbStudy Incidentals Allowance](#).

This course is funded under [Smart and Skilled, Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander](#). Participants that live and or work in NSW should be eligible for fee exemption - [see further information about subsidised training](#).

See [Certificate III Guiding \(Cultural Tourism\)](#) for residential study block dates and more information. Interested students [should apply now](#).

Sourdough Business Pathways events

[Sourdough Business Pathways](#) is partnering with the Workforce Australia Entrepreneur Facilitator to deliver a series of free live events for Northern Rivers small businesses. Follow the links below for information and registration.

- [Work Smarter: How to be proactive with technology](#) - Byron Bay: 12-1:45pm Tuesday 31 January 2023
- [Core Workshop: Health is your true wealth](#) - Tweed Heads: 12-1:30pm Thursday 9 February 2023

Get Connected - It's Free And Vital For Your Business

The New Year makes a good time to review your ATDW listing and check that it is accurate and engaging. [Get Connected](#) is Destination NSW's website membership program that connects into the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW). Simple and easy to use Get Connected membership is free and is open to all tourism operators within New South Wales. With Get Connected, Destination NSW gives you the opportunity to showcase your tourism products on the State's consumer websites FREE of charge and tap into over 1.5 million potential customers a month, both domestic and international - that's over 18.5 million people a year who are looking for tourism products.

Follow the prompts online to take advantage of this service and register with [ATDW](#) which is the national digital tourism platform that powers the Get Connected Program. If you already have an ATDW profile, check it is up-to-date and add fresh images and video as it becomes available. [Operator Guidelines](#) are available to ensure your business or event is correctly (and fully) profiled for best impact.

Funding And Other Opportunities

[Disability Employment - Tourism Local Navigators Pilot](#)

The objectives of this grant opportunity are to help small and medium sized (SME) tourism businesses address barriers they have previously identified in recruiting, retaining and progressing employees and jobseekers with disability. **Closes 21 February 2023.**

[Contemporary Music Touring Program](#)

The Contemporary Music Touring Program provides organisations, musicians, managers, agents and music networks involved in the performance of original Australian contemporary music with funding to tour and perform around Australia. Tours may consist of a range of different Australian contemporary music styles. They must include performances in at least 3 venues outside the performer's hometown. **Closes 7 March 2023.**

[Regional Arts Touring Fund](#)

Regional Arts Touring funding supports projects that provide access to arts and culture for audiences living in regional NSW.

Funding is available for tours of all artforms, including performing arts, music, visual arts, literature, history, museums and multi-arts. Applicants should demonstrate strong audience development and engagement strategies. **Closes 7 March 2023.**

North Coast Product Development

Realising The Great Australian Dream - Great Lakes Dinner

The Great Lakes Food Trail committee are hosting a "So you want to live on a farm" dinner with guest speakers leading a discussion on the great Australian dream of moving out of the city and moving to the country in search of a better lifestyle.

Confirmed speakers at the event are Andrew Smith, a third generation dairy farmer who brings fresh perspectives and ideas and will speak on conventional larger scale farming opportunities. Brett Cooper, a well-known local permaculture expert, will speak on setting up a small farm operation; and Great Lakes Food Trail producer as well as Mid Coast Landcare Farmer of the Year, Andrew Yeo will speak on the tips and traps of farming on the coast.

Dinner is by renowned local chefs Peter and Kerry Hodges from Tillerman's Restaurant using produce sourced locally from Great Lakes Food Trail members and served with local wine and beer.

- When - Starting 7.30pm, Thursday 23rd February
- Where - River Myall Resort Entertainment Venue, Bulahdelah

Support your local producers and [find more information and book tickets](#).

The Archibald Portraits - Grafton Regional Gallery

The innovative and vibrant evolution of the [Grafton Regional Gallery](#) has seen it become a rising star within the creative arts world. Right now there's a buzz in town as the gallery hosts one of the country's most significant portrait art awards, The Archibald Prize. The Archibald is an example of how art is for anyone, by anyone, of anyone with local heroes, famous faces, and personal inspirational figures depicted in the works are all here under one roof. Get in quickly as this exhibition is only open until 29 January 2023

Many of you will know Jo Harding, Tourism Officer at Clarence Valley Council. [Read her experience](#) of viewing this unique exhibition in her hometown gallery.



[Virtual Golf Centre Ballina](#)

The Ballina Virtual Golf Centre is the premier indoor golf facility in Northern Rivers of NSW. Whether you are a golf pro, golf nut, hacker, social golfer or a family they have the facilities for you to enjoy. The state-of-the-art golf simulator and tracking system is the best way to fine tune your game or just enjoy playing some of the best courses in the world like Augusta or St Andrews. They also have a licensed bar & food to enjoy in the comfort of the air-conditioned premises.

[3 Blind Mice - Gloucester](#)

Great new coffee shop in the centre of town, run and owned by chef Will with a great modern menu with plenty of vegan options. There are also local homemade gifts available.

[Ol' Mates Place - Iluka](#)

Permanent Food Van in Iluka, serving great breakfast from 6.30 (veggie options) and kebabs at lunch, outdoor garden seating available, 200m from the beach.

[Choux String - Kingscliff](#)

Established in 1993, Choux Box Café in an institution in Kingscliff. The team opened a new takeaway outpost called Choux String recently, ready for the summer holiday beachgoers.

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](#).

[Megafauna Party - Murwillumbah](#)

Forget Jurassic Park, come to a Megafauna party! The Tweed Regional Museum in Murwillumbah will expand into surrounding streets for an epic evening street party inspired by the *Capturing Nature* exhibition. There will be roaming giant Diprotodon puppets, activities for all ages, live music, prizes, and food and drink stalls. **28 January 2023.**

Masquerade Dance Party Celebrates Lismore's Italian Links

Lismore Friendship Festival Inc brings to Lismore [BEYOND VENICE](#), a night of music, dance and great food and a masquerade party in the spirit of the carnival of Venice and recognising Lismore's Italian sister cities of Conegliano and Vittorio Veneto. Bookings are essential (contact Julie at 0493631611) - or the Aardvark Brasserie (Deck & Lounge), Southern Cross University, Lismore. [Read Media Release](#).



[Yun yi barragay Tour - Sea Acres National Park](#)

Visitors on this easy 1.3km stroll along Sea Acres Rainforest boardwalk pass through coastal sub-tropical rainforest rich in bush tucker, medicine plants and shelter resources.

A NPWS Aboriginal guide invites visitors to celebrate the wisdom of Birpai culture and hear about how Aboriginal people lived in harmony with their environment. They'll discover how Aboriginal people utilised rainforest resources and their deep cultural knowledge to survive and prosper here for millennia. **To 17 March 2023.**

Action-Packed 2023 Events Calendar

Destination NSW is supporting a blockbuster calendar of major events for regional NSW throughout 2023, which will drive visitation and economic benefits across the state.

Some of the major events include:

- [NSW Pro Surf Series](#) - 21 February to 18 March - Great Lakes, Port Stephens, Central Coast
- [National Touch League](#) - 8-11 March - Coffs Harbour
- [Women's NSW Open Championships Golf](#) - 24-26 March - Forster/Tuncurry
- [Australian Women's Classic Golf](#) - 31 March to 2 April - Bonville
- [IRONMAN Australia](#) - 7 May - Port Macquarie

SAVE THE DATE - [Lismore Friendship Festival, LisAmore](#) is a free fun filled family day that celebrates the region's Italian cultural heritage through food, games, music and dance outdoors in a relaxed atmosphere. Lismore Turf Club **18 June 2023.**

LisAmore!
LOVING LISMORE
