



North Coast News & Views No. 161

\$1.5 Million Boost To Regional Event Funding

Event-goers across the country will soon be experiencing more of regional NSW thanks to the opening of the Regional Event Fund. The Regional Event Fund is managed through Destination NSW and offers three streams of funding:

- Incubator Event Fund - offers grants of up to \$20,000 to events that are in their first or second year of operation
- Flagship Event Fund - offers grants of \$20,000 and triennial grants of \$30,000 for marketing activities aimed at attracting visitors from outside their immediate region
- Event Development Fund - offers grants of up to \$50,000 to support strategic growth initiatives to events that have completed their third year of triennial Flagship Event funding.

Funding applications close on Wednesday 29 March 2023.

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

\$3.5 Million Boost For Nature-based Tourism Operators Across NSW

Visitor economy businesses seeking to develop nature-based experiences may be eligible for a share in \$3.5 million to support project expenses. Destination NSW is making available dollar-for-dollar matched grants from \$100,000 up to \$250,000 to businesses statewide to grow NSW's visitor economy. Eligible applicants include tour, attraction and accommodation providers and landholders.

The program has been developed in line with NSW Government strategies, including the Destination Network Destination Management Plans, to address key opportunities and actions. Applications for the grants will **open on 27 March 2023**.

[Read media release](#).

Destination NSW Welcomes Clark Webb To The Board

Minister for Tourism Ben Franklin has announced two new appointments to the Destination NSW Board. Founder of [Bularri Muurlay Nyanggan Aboriginal Corporation](#) Clark Webb and Chair of Regional Development Australia Sydney Anna Guillan AM have been appointed for three-year terms.

Mr Franklin said the appointments would complement the experience of the existing Board members.

"As a tourism operator and Gumbaynggirr and Bundjalung man, Clark will bring a crucial new perspective and make an invaluable contribution to the continued growth of the NSW visitor economy".

Mr Webb currently holds Board positions with the NSW Aboriginal Languages Trust and NSW Aboriginal Tourism Operators Council, and said he was looking forward to contributing to the growth of the NSW visitor economy.

"Strategising the growth of cultural eco-tourism will be central to my focus as a Destination NSW board member," he said.

"Tourism is a vehicle that can support cultural revitalisation in our communities. I aim to bring a unique grassroots perspective on how to combine cultural, ecological and economic sustainability to benefit the whole sector."

Mr Webb and Ms Guillan will join Chair Sally Loane, Deputy Chair Russell Balding AO and directors Steve Cox, Anne Loveridge, Rod McGeoch AO, The Hon. George Souris AM, Emma Hogan and Elizabeth Mildwater on the Destination NSW board.

[Read media release.](#)

North Coast Destination Management Plan Information Sessions

Destination North Coast are excited to invite our industry stakeholders to the launch of the [North Coast Destination Management Plan 2022 - 2030](#).

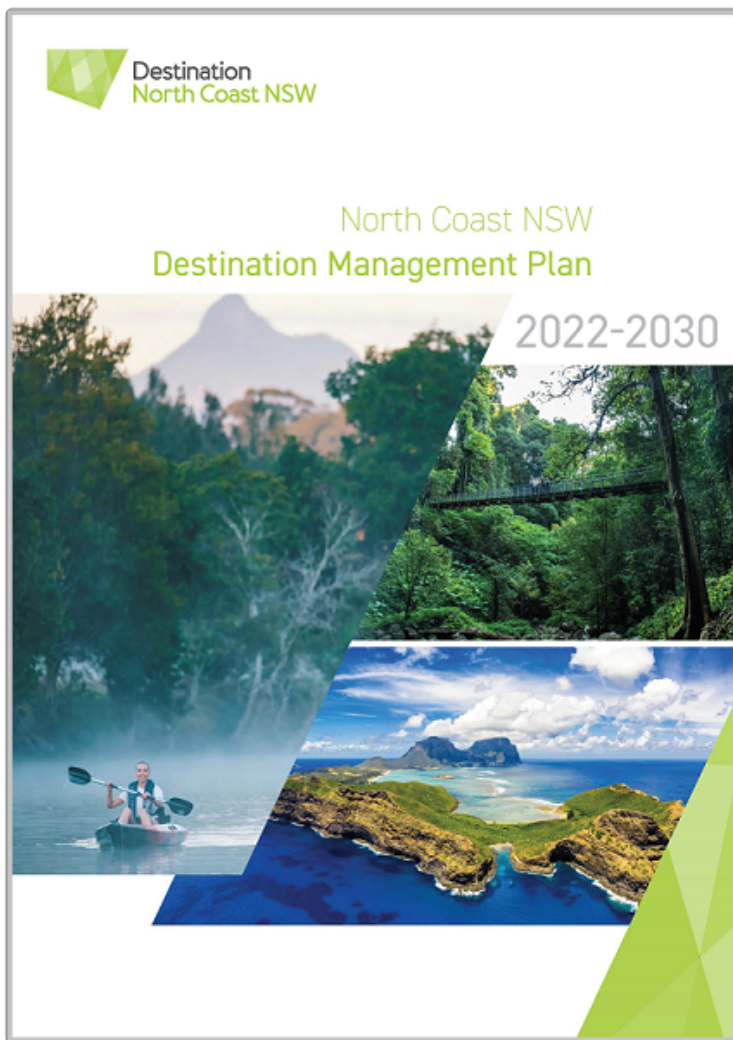
The North Coast Destination Management Plan (DMP) identifies regional strategies and actions for Destination North Coast and our region's 14 Local Government Areas that will help to shape our industry through to 2030.

The DMP provides a framework and roadmap for sustainable growth of the North Coast visitor economy and has been developed on the back of extensive research and consultation with many of you to help ensure a coordinated and sustainable approach. The North Coast DMP also aligns to the [NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 20230](#) (VES) and will assist in the development of many local plans.

At this session DNC will also unveil our **North Coast Accommodation Reinvestment Guide** and unpack some of the additional industry resources available to support growth of the visitor economy.

We are delighted to present the North Coast Destination Management Plan to you and invite you to join us at a session near you soon. Please register to attend a session below and for morning/afternoon tea catering, noting any dietary preferences.

- Tuesday 7 March - [Grafton 10am-12pm](#)
- Tuesday 7 March - [Coffs Harbour 2.30-4.30pm](#)
- Wednesday 8 March - [Port Macquarie 10am-12pm](#)
- Thursday 9 March - [Forster 10am-12pm](#)
- Monday 13 March - [Tweed 10am-12pm](#)
- Tuesday 14 March - [Byron 10am-12pm](#)



Destination NSW Boosts Its Focus On India

India holds huge promise as a visitor market for NSW. Not only is projected to become the world's most populous country in April 2023, with over 1.4 billion people, but Indians are the most adventurous travellers in the Asia Pacific region. Prior to the pandemic, India was the fastest growing segment to NSW, with Indian travellers spending an estimated \$444 million in the year ending December 2019.

Destination NSW hosted a Focus On India trade event from 12-17 February 2022 that gave 32 NSW tourism suppliers the opportunity to meet with 38 key agents from India and have also recently appointed a Country Manager for India, Samar Chokshi.

Direct flights between southern India and Australia support this focused approach.

Sky Is The Limit For Rare Flightless Bird

More than 30 threatened species on Lord Howe Island are making a remarkable recovery after the introduction of a rodent control program in 2019.

Before the program began, there were thousands of rodents on the island, damaging plants and animals. Since the program was introduced, more than 30 other threatened species found on Lord Howe Island have recovered, including:

- the Lord Howe wood-feeding cockroach, presumed extinct on the main Island for at least 80 years, has been rediscovered at a site in the north. This has prompted further surveys to determine the extent of this species and the success of other invertebrates across the Island.
- birds including the black-winged petrel, masked booby and Lord Howe currawong have demonstrated improved breeding success. Masked boobies are now breeding on the main Island, which hasn't been seen since the introduction of rodents, and anecdotal observations suggest that the number of currawongs may have doubled.
- four different critically endangered land snail species that were thought to be extinct have recently been recorded
- numerous plant species, including the critically endangered little mountain palm, have increased seedling and seed numbers, with recent surveys finding 17 times more juveniles at some sites compared to before rodent control.

[Read media release.](#)



Image: J Gilligan



Image: C Stehn



Image: J Gilligan

Top Tourism Towns - Nominations Closing Soon

NSW Tourism Industry Council is calling for towns across NSW to showcase their tourism excellence at the [Top Tourism Town Awards 2023](#).

The Top Tourism Town Awards highlight the value of tourism and the visitor economy to the cities, towns and villages across NSW and celebrates their commitment to encouraging tourism and visitation to their destinations, providing economic and social benefits to their communities.

Nominations close **3 March 2023** with final submissions due **5 April 2023**.

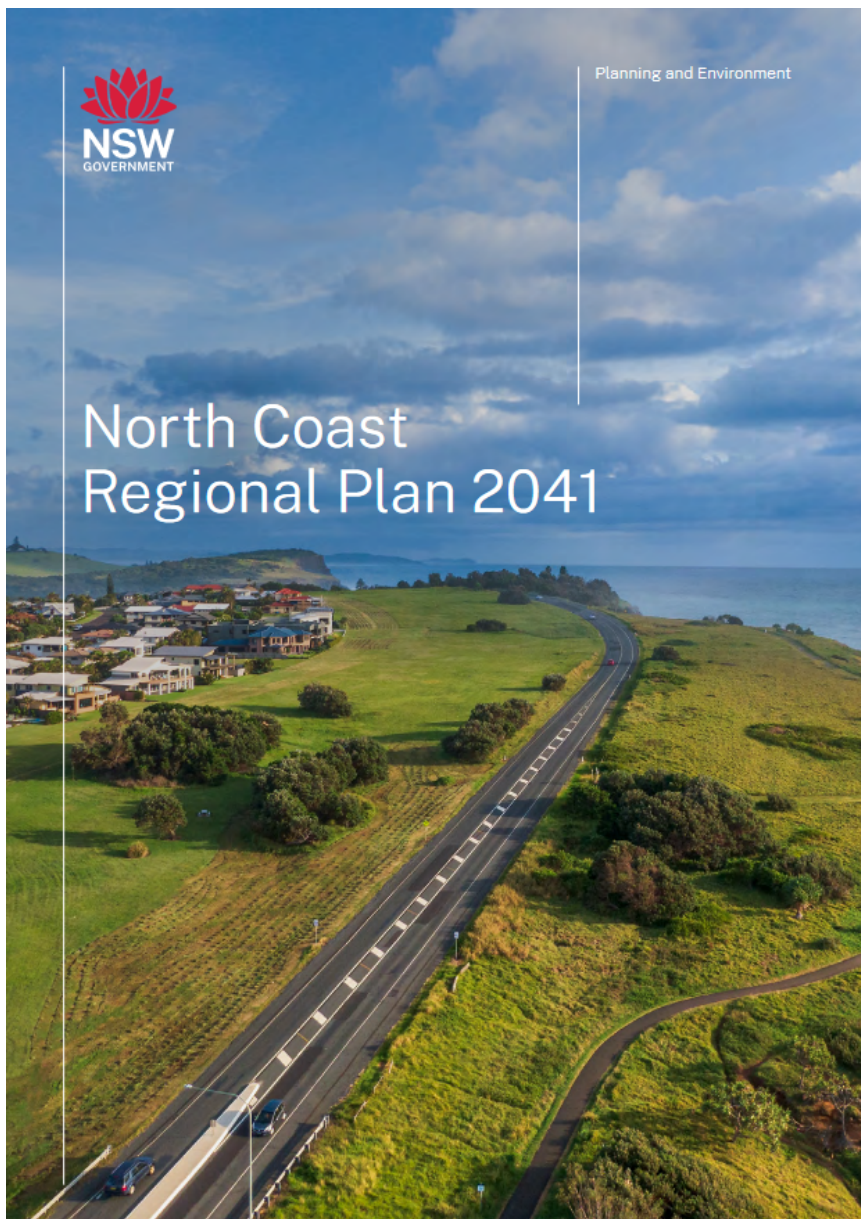
Autumn School Holiday Fun Awaits

Councils and eligible not-for-profit organisations looking to host activities over the upcoming autumn school holidays are urged to get in quick to secure funding under the NSW Government's Holiday Break program. All 93 regional councils and eligible not-for-profit organisations can apply for funding of up to \$7,000 to cover the cost of running youth events from Saturday, 8 April 2023 to Sunday, 23 April 2023.

Councils and not-for-profit organisations are urged to get in quick, with applications opening Monday, 20 February and **closing Friday, 3 March** or until funds are exhausted. Read media release.

[Find out more about the Holiday Break Program here](#) and [read media release](#).

North Coast Regional Plan 2041



The NSW Government has just recently released the *North Coast Regional Plan 2041* that provides an overarching framework to guide subsequent and more detailed land use plans, development proposals and infrastructure funding decisions at a regional, subregional and local level.

By planning for growth, change and opportunity, the Regional Plan aims to provide a framework for decision-making, balancing social, economic and environmental objectives.

Find more information and download the [North Coast Regional Plan 2041](#).

Priority Support For Tourism Apprenticeships

Tour guides and travel consultants have been included on the [2023 Australian Apprenticeships Priority List](#). This will allow both employers and apprentices to receive financial support.

Some apprenticeship courses have fee-free TAFE places available, providing further support for recovery in these critical visitor economy roles.

[Find out more here.](#)

Recent In-region Inbound Strategy Workshops

Destination North Coast was pleased to support the recent Destination NSW (DNSW) Inbound Strategy Workshops held in Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie which were well attended by North Coast visitor economy stakeholders.

These practical Inbound Strategy Workshops provided tourism businesses, such as tours, attractions and accommodation, with the necessary steps to develop and sell export-ready tourism products to the international travel trade.

In between these two meetings, DNC and DNSW had targeted meetings and site inspections with key stakeholders who attended these workshops.

If you plan to become export ready in the next 12 months, [contact Destination NSW](#) to register your interest in attending a future New Product Workshop, to meet with key Online Travel Agents (OTA) and Inbound Tourism Operator (ITO) buyers. You can also talk to them for more opportunities to target the travel trade.



Tourism Industry Insights

One Year On, International Tourism Continues To Bounce Back

Minister for Trade and Tourism, Senator Don Farrell, says a year to the day since Australia welcomed international tourists back to our shores, our dynamic and resilient visitor economy continues to recover with the support of the Australian Government. According to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data, [international arrivals in December 2022](#) were at 60 per cent of December 2019 arrivals. That's a significant increase on March 2022, when international arrivals were at just 20 per cent of the number recorded in the same month in 2019. International arrival numbers are expected to keep growing as aviation capacity increases, with Tourism Research Australia projecting international visitor expenditure to exceed pre-pandemic levels in 2024 and international visitor arrivals to exceed pre-pandemic levels in 2025.

The visitor economy, including long-stay international students, was Australia's fourth largest export sector before the COVID-19 pandemic. It was worth \$166 billion annually to the economy. [Read media release.](#)

Strong 2022 Results For Caravan Industry

Caravan Industry Association of Australia has released the sector's 2022 manufacturing and import numbers with nearly 50,000 registrations recorded new to market. Locally produced units reached 28,031 (+17.1% from previous year) a number not seen since post Cyclone Tracy, and when combined with imported product (20,498 +8.36% from previous year), saw the highest rate ever of new caravans entering the Australian market. These rates are directly attributed to the strong domestic demand for all things caravanning and Australia's desire to reconnect with our beautiful country. [Find more information here](#) and read [media release](#).

Around The Region

Northern Rivers Rail Trail - Website Live

The brand new [Northern Rivers Rail Trail website](#) went live for the trail opening that happened this week on the 1st March. Jump online and plan ahead for your first trip to the Rail Trail. Find safety tips, all you need to know, and what to prepare, plan and pack in one place.

NSW Triumphs At Street Art Awards

Six street art experiences in NSW have secured national accolades at the 2022 Australian Street Art Awards. There were three Gold Awards: *The Last Lion* by Sophi Odling and Christina Huynh at Burwood Chinatown Precinct, the [Hello Koalas Sculpture Trail in Port Macquarie](#) and Banna Lane in Griffith. The awards are great news for the NSW visitor economy, as arts travellers stay almost one-and-a-half times longer and spend about one-and-a-half times more daily than domestic visitors, according to Australia Council for the Arts' [Domestic Art Tourism: Connecting the Country Report](#).

Indigenous Projects Will Make Their Mark

A leading Aboriginal organisation on the Coffs Coast has received almost \$350,000 in funding through the NSW Government's Community and Place Grants program. Two projects were funded:

- **Strengthening and expanding cultural and education access** - the first part of the project is new infrastructure for the Gumbaynggirr Giingana Freedom School. The project also includes the purchase of a 22-seat bus.
- **Yilaami - cultural tourism driving sustainable economic development** - the project aims to develop a wide-ranging Aboriginal experience, constructing the 20-cabin Yilaami Eco-Resort connecting the environment and Aboriginal culture. The project includes the purchase of two vehicles and the purchase of IT equipment.

[Read media release.](#)

Draft Economic Development Strategy on exhibition

Share your thoughts on the first-ever MidCoast Economic Development Strategy, currently on exhibition. The purpose is to drive local economic growth that will have a long-term positive impact on the future of MidCoast businesses and communities. The draft strategy has been developed by Council in close partnership with the business chambers across the MidCoast, through the Economic Development Strategy Reference Group, led by the Mayor.

You can download the whole ED Strategy or use the click-to-read function for onscreen viewing: [MidCoast Economic Development Strategy | Have Your Say](#).

Discover Richmond Valley On Channel 10.

Popular television show What's Up Down Under will [Discover the Richmond Valley](#) as they show off the sights and sounds of the Valley on Channel 10.

Host Macca will be joined by singing star and now Ellangowan resident Shannon Noll as he and his family take a tour of the Richmond Valley in a caravan.

The first episode aired on 25 February and the next on Saturday 5 March on Channel 10 at 3pm. If you can't catch it there, you can see a replay on 10BOLD on Sunday, or on 10Play. [See a sneak peek here.](#)

Eyes In The Skies Are On The Coffs Coast

Over the next two months, Link Airways travellers will feast their eyes on the beautiful Coffs Coast, featured on the cover and 12 pages in the latest edition of *LINK* magazine. [See the online edition here.](#)

The One And Only Tweed Valley.

In November, over 100 [Australian Society of Travel Writers](#) (ASTW) members attended their annual conference in the Tweed, with 65 also taking part in 10 separate pre and post conference tours, showcasing over 100 local Tweed tourism businesses and all corners of the region. Great article in the Sydney Morning Herald's Traveller liftout - [see the story here.](#)

Industry Development And Other Opportunities

Destination Southern NSW General Manager Role

If you are a person who "wants to make a difference" in regional NSW, Destination Southern NSW have just the role to enable you do it. Join a great team and highly skilled Board, to lead Visitor Economy growth in Southern NSW, as their new General Manager. [Find more information here.](#)

Renewing Lismore's Business Community And Local Economy

Lismore City Council invites local businesses to be part of the next series of Business Renewal Forum sessions. Please [register here](#) to get involved, by sharing your thoughts and/or attending face-to-face sessions in Lismore:

- Monday, 13 March, 4.30pm - 6pm at The Hotel Metropole, 98 Keen Street, Lismore
- Tuesday, 14 March, 9.30am-11am at the Northern Rivers Conservatorium, 152 Keen Street, Lismore

Your input will inform Lismore City Council's planning, advocacy and collaborations with government agencies, and together with local businesses and organisations to progress through disaster recovery and renewal

International Market Updates and Live Q& A session From Tourism Australia

Tourism Australia's (TA's) international teams have prepared a series of **recorded market updates** may be of interest to all of you especially if you attended one of the recent Destination NSW Inbound Strategy Workshops and are keen to tap into international markets. [Access market updates here.](#)

In addition to this, TA is hosting a very special **LIVE Q&A sessions** as a follow-up to these to answer your questions on anything that might not have been covered in the pre-records. The two sessions (and content covered) will be:

- 4.00pm, Friday 3 March - Covering the UK, Europe, India, New Zealand
- 11.00am, Friday 10 March - Covering the Americas, China, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Japan, Korea

[Register here.](#)

Please watch the market updates ahead of the Q&A session as the same info will not be covered again.

Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Conference

Registrations are open for the Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Conference, held via an in-person experience on 28 April and online on 11 May 2023. The conference will provide information on catering to the valuable accessible and inclusive market and how to promote sustainable growth. [Find out more and register here.](#)

Funding And Other Opportunities

[Festivals Australia](#)

Festivals Australia funds high-quality arts projects that invite community participation and audience engagement. Projects can include but are not limited to a parade, performance, workshop, installation or exhibition.

The aim is to give community members living in regional or remote Australia the chance to participate in or attend an arts experience at a festival, or a significant one-off community celebration.

Please note: Festivals Australia will only fund a single project at a festival, not a range of unrelated activities across a festival program. **Closes 20 March 2023.**

[Qantas Regional Grants program](#)

The Qantas Regional Grants program offers \$10 million in support over five years to Australian-based communities and projects that are looking to benefit our regional areas. Entry is open to Australian based individuals, not-for-profit community groups and organisations of any size, who are seeking funding to help enhance the lives of people in regional communities. **Closes 20 May 2023.**

Screen NSW Grants Program

[Early Development](#) offers support for both pre-draft and early draft costs for film, TV and online production.

[Advanced Development](#) contributes towards later stage draft and non-draft costs to complete financing where a strong interest has already been established in the marketplace.

Both programs close **30 June 2023.**

[Event Development](#)

The Event Development stream supports events that have previously received the maximum funding permitted through the Flagship Event stream and can present a strategy for future growth that includes the continued development of its tourism potential to drive overnight visitation to the event. **Ongoing**

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](#).

[Macksville Laneway Festival](#)

A new community arts festival is coming to Macksville! As the laneway connects the town to the river, the festival reconnects people through art and performance. Featuring live bands, fire show, street performers, street art photo trail, market stalls, food trucks, kids lantern making + parade, kids and young adult circus playspace, community rock choir, giant games, dancing, laneway cricket comp, artist talks & workshops. **11 March 2023.**

[Inferno National Touch League](#)

The Inferno National Touch League (NTL) is a nationwide tournament for the sport of Touch Football, held annually in Coffs Harbour NSW. The 2023 Inferno NTL will be held from **8-11 March 2023.**

[Valley Fest](#)

Valley Fest will take place over 3 days with FREE live gigs taking place at a number of locations within the Orara Valley. **10-12 March 2023.**



[Summer Beach Hop](#)

This retro music festival in the city of Coffs Harbour combines classic cars, retro music and fun by the beach using the classic location of the recently refurbished Coffs Jetty Foreshores. **18-19 March 2023.**

[Trails and Tails](#)

Bring your dog/s. If you don't have a dog you can run solo. Grab a friend or 2 and walk and talk. Get the kids out and come explore what Cairncross State Forest has to offer. **19 March 2023.**

[Ulmarra Music and Arts Festival](#)

The Ulmarra Music and Arts Festival is a free, all inclusive, all ages, drug and alcohol free event. There will be art workshops, food trucks, children's activities and music from some incredible local artists. **19 March 2023.**

[Kingscliff Triathlon](#)

Picture perfect coastal destination, with a family friendly course, combined with Kingy's laid back atmosphere....it's easy to see why the Kingy Tri is one of Australia's favourite multi-sport events! **19 March 2023.**
