



North Coast News & Views No. 163

OPEN - Nature-Based Visitor Experience Development Grants

Visitor economy businesses seeking to develop regional 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 in regional NSW to grow NSW's visitor economy.

Examples of eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- Visitor attractions delivering a new or upgraded visitor experiences focusing on the natural elements of the attraction and area
- On-property storage, end-of-trip and bike maintenance facilities in proximity to rail trails and mountain bike parks
- Storage facilities for equipment related to walking and cycling experiences, such as transfer vehicle garaging or kayak storage
- Post-experience wellness facilities for cyclists and walkers e.g. float baths
- Viewing platforms and walkways e.g. for wetlands and wildlife viewing
- Facilities, structures and observatories for stargazing experiences
- Nature accommodation including caravan parks, cabins and glamping accommodation in a nature setting.

The program has been developed in line with NSW Government strategies, including the Destination Network [Destination Management Plans](#), to address key opportunities and actions.

Find out more and apply for a [Nature-Based Visitor Experience Development Grant](#). Applications close **22 May 2023**.



North Coast Success At Australian Tourism Awards

A week or so ago in Sydney, the best of the best tourism operators from each Australian State and Territory gathered for the 2022 National Tourism Awards.

Destination North Coast congratulates all the North Coast operators who represented the region with finalists across several categories.

A special call out to our SILVER award winners.

SILVER went to [Potager, a Kitchen Garden](#) in the Tourism Restaurants & Catering Services category. Huge congratulations to Peter and his team for being passionate advocates for the region and the provenance of our amazing food. You do the North Coast proud.

SILVER also went to [MidCoast Council/Destination Barrington](#) in the Tourism Marketing & Campaigns Category. Great job Deb, Sharon, Ben, Thomas and the team. You generate amazing results from the work you do.

A big shout out to all of the North Coast finalists who are all winners in our eyes!

[See all the category winners here.](#)

NSW Tourism Minister

The new NSW Labor Government has assigned John Graham to look after tourism in the state on an interim basis. The Special Minister of State Minister for Roads, the Arts, and Night-time Economy and Music will incorporate tourism into his portfolio responsibility for now, until further cabinet confirmations are announced. The previous NSW Tourism Minister was Ben Franklin.

Tourism Jobs Recover To Near Pre COVID-19 Levels

Tourism jobs increased 12.1 per cent in December quarter 2022, bringing the total number of jobs in the industry back to almost pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Jonathon Khoo, ABS head of tourism statistics, said: "The recovery in tourism following the COVID-19 pandemic is catching up with the total economy".

[Read media release.](#)

Tourism Industry Insights

Destination Australia Recap

On Thursday 16 March, Tourism Australia (TA) held its annual Destination Australia conference, and it was the biggest ever with over 800 industry and media attending in person and around 250 online. It was an incredible day of speakers as TA looked ahead together to the challenges and opportunities of 2023.

You can [watch a video recap here](#) and [view the photos here](#).

Aussies Hitting The Road

The number of caravan and camping trips taken last year in Australia have now overtaken 2019 levels, according to [a new report compiled by the Caravan Industry Association of Australia](#).

The industry recorded 15.1 million trips and 60.1 million visitor nights in 2022 - the first time it has surpassed 15 million trips and 60 million nights.

According to the Association's Business Conditions Report, the industry's six-month outlook is promising, with rising cost of living resulting in reduced household spending, spurring Aussies to explore their own backyard instead of forking out for an overseas holiday. The caravan & camping industry is braced for further uncertainty however, with CEO Stuart Lamont citing increased competition from short-haul international markets and cruise holidays.

Luxe Sees Rise Of The Physical

Luxury travellers are seeking a greater sense of physical connection on trips in a bid to compensate for an increasingly alienating digital world, a [new report published by Luxury Gold](#) has suggested. "We used to boast about the places we've been to and different country stamps in our passports, now it's all digital and people are looking for new, physical ways to connect with their holiday memories," Luxury Gold MD Toni Ambler said. For Gen Z travellers embarking on luxury trips, the report suggested adventures are now less about experience-driven priorities and more about taking items home as a status symbol, with "on-stay merching" now gaining traction.

"People are looking for human service for humans and by humans, who understand unique needs more than a bot or an algorithm ever could," the report noted, adding that travel agents will also be in greater demand as personalised trips become even more popular.

Around The Region

National Parks Update

The National Parks and Wildlife Service is moving full steam ahead repairing roads and visitor facilities in the Tweed Byron and Richmond River areas of the NSW North Coast. [See what's open and what's coming soon here.](#)

Autumn Great Lakes Food Trail

The Great Lakes Food Trail producers are looking forward to welcoming visitors to their farms and locations on **Sunday 16 April** when the Autumn Great Lakes Food Trail will take place.

Now in its seventh year, the Trail can be followed along 'hubs' in Forster, Wootton, Topi (Bungwahl) and Bulahdelah. [Find more information here.](#)

Macleay Valley Coast Tourism Meetup

Join local operators and stakeholders at the Macleay Valley Coast Tourism Meetup, a fun-filled networking event at the Heritage Hotel of Gladstone on **18 April 2023**. [Register here.](#)

Gondwana Green Drinks

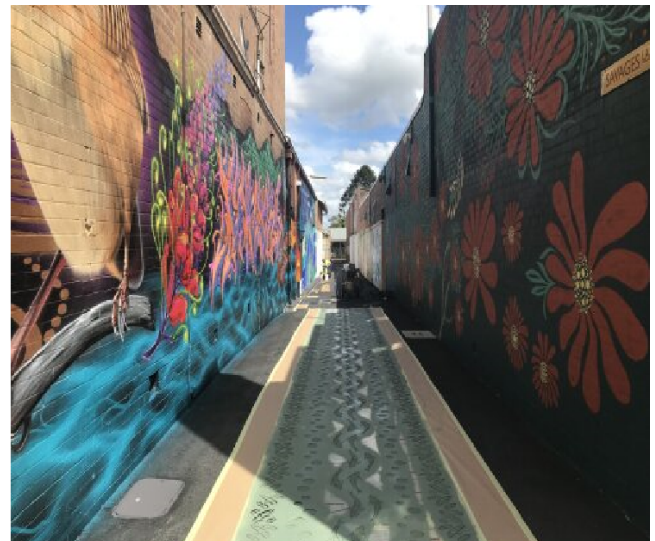
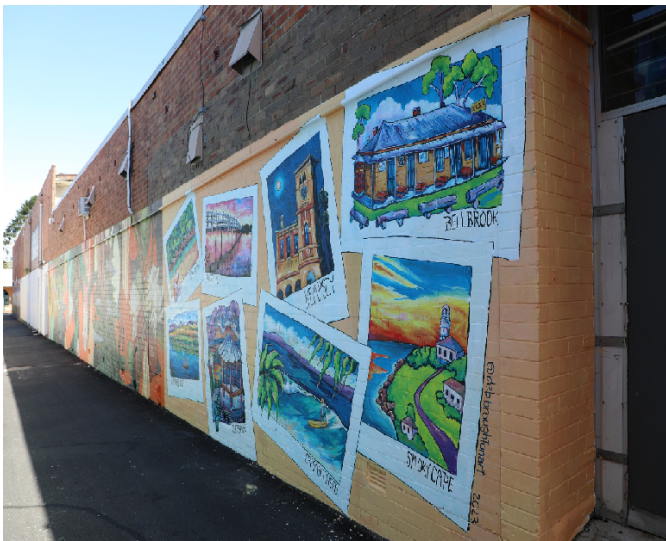
Gondwana Green Drinks is a welcoming space for people in Northern NSW and South East Queensland interested in environmental issues to meet other like-minded people and to learn about other organisations, events, and groups. Join them for this informal networking event in Byron Bay where environmentally-minded people meet over social drinks. **21 April 2023**. [Find more information here.](#)

Byron Regenerative Tourism Workshop

Destination Byron made the first step towards a Regenerative Tourism future by creating a Byron Regenerative Tourism Workshop, to start a conversation on how local tourism can make a positive impact on the environment and community. The workshop will be held at Crystalbrook, Byron Bay and will be facilitated by Dr Dianne Dredge, Director of the Tourism CoLab, Australia's most notable experts in Regenerative Tourism and keynote speaker at the 2021 North Coast Tourism Symposium. **26 April 2023**. [Register here.](#)

Kempsey Laneway Revitalisation

Thanks to funding from the NSW Government's Street as Shared Spaces Program, Kempsey Shire Council has re-imagined and revitalised two key Laneways in Kempsey's CBD - Elringtons Lane (beside Coles) and Savages Lane. These two public spaces received new safety and decorative treatments through revamped pavement surfaces, water mains renewal, public art, lighting and upgraded CCTV. [Find more information here.](#)



Grafton Waterfront Precinct Nears Completion

The [Grafton Waterfront Precinct](#) is nearing completion and should be ready for the public to enjoy in the coming months.

The project will create improved access to the banks of the mighty Clarence River with a 700m pathway meandering along the water's edge, and plenty of shade and seating to encourage people to use the riverside landscape. Accessibility is a priority of the project, with wheelchair and stair access at both Duke St and Clarence St when it is complete.

With waterway access and activation and inclusive access both identified as priorities in the [North Coast Destination Management Plan 2022 - 2030](#), we congratulate Clarence Valley Council on this keystone project.

Industry Development And Other Opportunities

Tourism Australia's Next Webinar

Tourism Australia's next Industry Webinar will be held at 11am tomorrow, 31 March. [Register to attend.](#)

Live & Local Music Industry Forum

Join the experts from the Live Music Office as they facilitate this 'think tank' session to support the local live music industry. Whether you're a musician, business or venue owner, event manager or all-round live music enthusiast, this forum is a valuable opportunity to network with the industry and council to discuss what a thriving live music scene looks like for the Coffs Coast. C.ex International Stadium 4 April 2023. [Book here.](#)



Consultation Begins For Byron Shire Events Strategy

The objective for the Byron Shire Events Strategy is to set a common direction for future small - medium events for the Shire, Council and the local communities. The Events Strategy will be developed in parallel with the Business, Industry and Visitor Economy Strategy. If you'd like to find out more about it, please email events@byron.nsw.gov.au.

2023 Tourism Australia Media Kit

The 2023 Australia Media Kit is available to download from the [Resources for Media](#) page Tourism Australia's corporate website. The media kit is packed with new PR content including: overviews of each state and territory, what's new and happening in the year to come and beyond, travel trends, and story ideas for international media.

Grant & Tender Writing Workshop

Want to learn how to write a grant or tender? Then this FREE Grant & Tender workshop with Kathie Heyman from NSW Business Connect is for you. The workshop will be held at Ballina Surf Club on 26 April 2023. [Register here.](#)

Tourism & Transport Forum's 2023 Green Revolution Summit

The [2023 Green Revolution Summit](#) will take place on 27 April 2023 in Sydney and attendees will hear from industry leaders and innovators as they outline their plans for a green and more sustainable future. This year's event will feature the theme 'Sustainability Changemakers'.

Digital Solutions Program Workshop

The Australian Tourism Industry Group (ATIG) is a free service provided by [The Business Hub](#) in conjunction with funding from the Australian Government's [Digital Solutions program](#). Through ATIG, Australian tourism operators can access free monthly webinars to help optimise their digital marketing and generate a greater return for their digital efforts. Their next workshop, "Managing Tourism Reviews & Ratings" will be held on 17 April at 10am. [Register here.](#)



Tilma Group - Support For Agritourism Development

The Tilma Group have gathered together the support currently available (State by State) to develop or improve agritourism experiences. [Find more information here.](#)

Outdoor Industry Summit To Be Held On The North Coast

Outdoors NSW & ACT Limited has announced that it will be hosting a biennial Outdoor Industry Summit which will be held on the North Coast of NSW from the 28th - 30th June 2023.

The event is open to all levels of the outdoor volunteer and workforce, and all sectors of the industry. According to Lori Modde, CEO of Outdoors NSW & ACT, "The Outdoor Industry Summit is a unique opportunity for everyone in the industry to come together, network with each other, and collaborate to drive positive change. We're excited to be hosting this event and look forward to welcoming everyone to the beautiful Lennox Head in NSW."

The event is already strongly supported by Destination NSW, Paddy Pallin, and Skills IQ and will feature keynote speakers, including Mark McCrindle, a social researcher, futurist, and TEDx speaker and there'll also be panel discussions, workshops, and networking opportunities.

[Registration for the Outdoor Industry Summit](#) is now open, and early-bird tickets are available until May 5th.

First Nations Tourism, Employment & Business Enterprise Conferences

The First Nations Tourism, Employment & Business Enterprise Conferences have announced featured speakers for the upcoming conferences which brings Indigenous leaders, experts, and stakeholders together. This not only showcases successful programs and discusses critical challenges faced by First Nations tourism, businesses, employment and training, but also establishes an industry voice for Indigenous tourism operators through the establishment of an independent national peak body for First Nations Tourism Operators in Australia. Sessions at the conference will range from establishing new joint ventures, the role of governments and the role our community have to play with Elders leading the way in exploring opportunities for collaboration and progress in Indigenous tourism, employment and business sectors. **26-28 July 2023, Cairns.** [Find more information here.](#)

Australian Regional Tourism Convention 2023 Destination Announced

Australian Regional Tourism is pleased to announce that the City of Newcastle will be hosting the 2023 Australian Regional Tourism Convention (ARTC) to be held 10 - 12 October 2023.

The Australian Regional Tourism Convention is a must-attend event for local councils, regional tourism organisations, tourism professionals and government personnel wanting to contribute to the future of regional tourism in Australia. Every sector of the tourism industry is invited to attend the convention and take the opportunity to collaborate and investigate solutions to shared challenges while shaping the future of Australia's regional tourism. This year's theme is *Creating the Regional Visitor Economy of the Future.* [Keep up to date via the ARTC website.](#)

Funding And Other Opportunities

CLOSING SOON - NSW Regional Business Event Development Fund

The NSW Regional Business Event Development Fund is designed to help stakeholders create, attract and support exciting business events for regional NSW and to support new business event initiatives.

Managed by Destination NSW, the Fund offers matched dollar-for-dollar funding of grants between \$15,000 and \$100,000, and is designed to assist stakeholders create, attract and deliver new business events and business event-related infrastructure projects in regional NSW. **Closes 31 March 2023.**

National Disability Conference Initiative 2023-24

This grant opportunity provides grants to conference organisers to assist people with disability to participate in nationally focused, disability-related, conferences held in Australia. Grants will support eligible conference organisers to provide accessibility measures that will maximise the inclusion and participation of people with disability at their conference. This in turn supports the vision of Australia's Disability Strategy. **Closes 27 April 2023.**

North Coast Product Development

Selah Valley - The Tweed

Three luxury hinterland villas are now available. One and two bedroom self-contained villas feature stunning interiors and hinterland views. Further group accommodation and venue is under construction and Stage 2 opening soon.

Mariefields Farmstay and Homestead - The Tweed

This new venue in the hinterland village of Tyalgum offers a 6-bedroom homestead on 165 acres of environmental paradise with a private function room ideal for corporate retreats or multi-generational stays.

Capones Bar - Port Macquarie

This speakeasy-style bar pays homage to the prohibition era and is open Wednesday - Saturday nights.

Crowdy Bay Eco Resort - Barrington Coast

Fresh air, pristine beaches, beautiful wildflowers and native wildlife. In an unspoilt pocket of coastal paradise, Crowdy Bay Eco Resort sits gently behind the sand dunes, surrounded by the grounding tranquillity of the National Park and the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean.



The Link Cafe - Coffs Coast

The Link Cafe by Nyanggan Gapi is nestled in The Link complex, Toormina. The cafe is surrounded by award winning gardens and has a playground, outdoor seating, and wheelchair accessibility. 100% of the profits go to support the local Aboriginal community through employment, community programs and the Gumbaynggirr Giingana Freedom School.

Earthbound Tours - Byron

Earthbound Tours offer small group walking tours in pristine natural forests and long immaculate oceanic coastlines. The tour guides love sharing their local tips with those keen to learn and engage with the local environment.

The Old Bank - Macleay Valley

The Old Bank in Gladstone has embraced recent upgrades and will now be offering boutique accommodation, hosting events, and have recently acquired a new boat for cruising the river with guests.

Sunquncha Temple - Barrington Coast

A purpose-built wellbeing destination offering yoga, meditation and wellness retreats near Gloucester. There is a 10-metre accommodation dome (with air conditioning and fireplace), 180-degree rural views and also spacious glamping bell tents for overnight stays.

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](#).

[Easter Ceramics Market](#)

North Coast Ceramics bring you an Easter Ceramics Market at Newrybar Hall. **8-9 April 2023.**

[Coffs Food Lovers Long Lunch](#)

Gather your foodie friends for a fabulous **Coffs Food Lovers Long Lunch** special event. Sit back and enjoy a delicious 2-course lunch at WYLDE OAK Café. Four guest local food producers will share their food stories with you. Foodie facts and secrets will be revealed, with a Q&A to follow. **29 April 2023.**

[SWIFF'23](#)

SWIFF is delighted to reveal the key festival artwork for SWIFF'23. A reflection on the festival experience, designed by Saige Browne

This key art is on the cover of the SWIFF'23 program and will soon be synonymous around Coffs Harbour and Bellingen with stunning world cinema, revealing documentaries, one-of-a-kind events, and so much more. **20 April - 5 May 2023.**



[Byron Coast Walk](#)

The Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service Byron Coast Walk celebrates its 10th anniversary. Starting in Byron you can choose from 3 distances to complete along the iconic coastline stretching from Byron to Ballina. **29 April 2023.**
