



North Coast News & Views No. 167

North Coast Tourism Symposium & North Coast Tourism Awards

How time flies. It's on again! Just 8 weeks to go! Thursday 27th July!

Destination North Coast in partnership with [Tweed Tourism Company](#), is delighted to be once again delivering this year's North Coast Tourism Symposium with a jam-packed program of expert speakers and specialists in sectors from wellness and sustainability to nature and camping and caravanning.

The draft program will be released soon but see below for a taste of what to expect.

If you haven't already cleared your diary, do make a plan to attend. 100 percent of respondents to our post-event survey last year rated the Tourism Symposium as *Good Value for Money* with 100 percent of respondents also saying *they plan to attend again this year*. We are looking forward to reuniting with you all, sharing insights and experiences, and celebrating the best of the best of our industry and the North Coast visitor economy.

One survey respondent commented '*Loved the whole day and night, so well presented and plenty of fresh ideas for going forward. Thanks to the team it was a wonderful and memorable event.*' whilst another noted '*Another brilliant program and symposium! I left feeling motivated and it will foster discussions.*'

A **celebratory Regional Awards event and gala dinner** will follow and presents a highly anticipated opportunity for calling out and rewarding success. See information below on [Entering the Awards](#) (there is still time with applications closing 31 May 2023).

[Early Bird/Event Combo Tickets are ON SALE NOW.](#)

As well as the Tourism Symposium and North Coast Regional Awards celebration and gala-dinner, you'll also find a fabulous pre-event Northern Rivers Rail Trail activity and some included pre-conference wellness options.

Draft Symposium Program

As in previous years, our Symposium Program will share insights and trends from tourism and business experts working to both inform and stimulate discussion and debate. We'll bring you updates and forward outlooks as well as a great panel discussion, opportunity analysis and more.

This year's Symposium theme, *Redefining Normal*, gives scope for our speakers to share their insights on topics such as:

Opening Keynote - Elian Miles - *"Changing times, emerging trends: Responding strategically to the trends impacting tourism"*
Camping & Caravanning - *"Trends, insights and implementations"*
National Parks & Wildlife - *"Redefining engagement with nature"*
Interactive Panel Discussion - *"Reconceptualise - capitalise - normalise"*
Wellness with Tim Jack Adams - *"Thriving sustainably"*
Destination North Coast and Destination NSW - *"Updates and Outlook"*
Tourism Australia - *"TA and the international opportunity"*

The team and Board of Destination North Coast look forward to seeing you in the Tweed at the North Coast Tourism Symposium and North Coast Regional Tourism Awards on 27 July 2022.

[Peppers Salt Resort & Spa, Kingscliff](#) is the venue for this year's North Coast Tourism Symposium and also a key conference sponsor.

For Symposium delegates looking for iconic resort-style accommodation in Kingscliff, Peppers Salt Resort & Spa is contemporary resort chic with rooms, spa suites and apartments. The acclaimed Season Restaurant serves breakfast daily (included in our [special Symposium rate](#)) and with seasonal, organic and fresh produce from local growers on the menu. Staying at Peppers Salt Resort & Spa in Salt Village lets you enjoy easy access to the North Coast Tourism Symposium with the opportunity to also experience the many [water activities, tours and dining options](#). Perhaps stay for the weekend and explore World Heritage-listed National Parks, hire a bike, partake in active and adventurous activities, or simply enjoy beach time.



PEPPERS

SALT RESORT & SPA
KINGSCLIFF



CLOSING SOON - North Coast Tourism Awards

Destination North Coast, in partnership with Business NSW are pleased to announce the return of the North Coast Tourism Award as they recognises growth, entrepreneurship and celebrate tourism businesses success across the North Coast region.

Entering tourism awards is a rewarding experience. It provides an opportunity for businesses to reflect on the goals, strategies and vision which have shaped business success, and insights gained can assist business growth and long-term sustainability.

[Entries across 17 categories](#) close soon (**31 May 2023**). Finalists will be announced on 23 June 2023.

Join us in the Tweed to celebrate winners at the North Coast Tourism Awards Gala Dinner, being held in conjunction with the [North Coast Tourism Symposium](#), on **Thursday 27 July 2023**. The celebratory dinner will be held at [Plantation House](#).

[Early Bird/Combo Event Tickets on SALE NOW](#).



NORTH COAST
TOURISM AWARDS



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NSW**

Reviving International Tourism Grant Program

Austrade has partnered with the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) and the Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) to deliver the Reviving International Tourism Grant Program (RITG). RITG is part of the Australian Government's \$48m commitment in the Visitor Economy National Strategy THRIVE 2030 to support the tourism and travel industry to sustainably grow the Visitor Economy.

RITG will provide funding of up to \$9m to support international-ready Australian tourism exporters and travel wholesalers to undertake demand driving activities that rebuild and strengthen international supply chains. Eligibility and application information is available in the Grant Guidelines, available on the [Austrade website](#).

Northern Rivers Rail Trail Takes Out Top Gong In National Trust Heritage Awards

A commitment to preserving and celebrating the heritage of the Tweed section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail (NRRT) has been acknowledged with an award at the prestigious National Trust Heritage Awards.

The Tweed section of the [Northern Rivers Rail Trail](#) took out first place in the Conservation - Landscape category of the Awards at a ceremony in Sydney on Friday 12 May.

The award is the first win for the project and underscores the success of the Tweed section of the Rail Trail which has already attracted thousands of residents and visitors since its opening on 1 March 2023.

The Northern Rivers Rail Trail was one of 17 outstanding projects acknowledged at the National Trust Heritage Awards - an annual celebration of exceptional heritage conservation practices.

The 24km Tweed section is the first stage of the [Northern Rivers Rail Trail](#) which will eventually stretch 132 km from Murwillumbah to Casino in Northern NSW.



Image: Tweed Shire Council

National Reconciliation Week

[National Reconciliation Week](#) commences this Saturday, 27 May and continues through to 3 June. The week is a time to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia. The theme for this year is Be a Voice for Generations and encourages all Australians to be a voice for reconciliation in tangible ways in our everyday lives - where we live, work and socialise.



Tourism On Track For Full Recovery

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) World Tourism Barometer for Q1 2023 shows international tourism is well on its way to returning to pre-pandemic levels, with twice as many people travelling during the first quarter of 2023 than in the same period of 2022.

Overall, international arrivals reached 80 per cent of pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2023. An estimated 235 million people went on holidays internationally in the first three months, more than double the same period of 2022.

UNWTO said Asia and the Pacific had accelerated its recovery with 54 per cent of pre-pandemic levels, but this upward trend is set to accelerate now that most destinations, particularly China, have re-opened.

[Learn more here.](#)

Tourism Industry Insights

Latest Tourism Statistics Released.

Domestic overnight visitors, nights away and spend in NSW all exceeded pre-pandemic levels in February 2023 according to Tourism Research Australia's latest [National Visitor Survey report](#). There were 2.6 million domestic overnight visitors to NSW, up seven per cent from February 2019. Domestic overnight visitor expenditure in NSW was \$2 billion, up 34 per cent from February 2019. There were two million overnight visitors to regional NSW, which was up 12 per cent from February 2019, while visitor expenditure was \$1.2 billion, up 31 per cent

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) released the [international visitor arrivals numbers for March 2023](#). They show visitor arrivals returned to 73 per cent, compared to the same month in 2019. This is up from 65 per cent in February 2023, compared to February 2019.

The newly released [State Tourism Satellite Account \(STSA\) 2021-22](#) highlights the importance of tourism to each state and territory economy.

Cost Of Living Insights

The latest [Cost of Living Insights Report from CommBank iQ](#) shows Australians are prioritising travel over everyday expenditure. Travel and accommodation spend was up 39 per cent in January to March 2023 compared to the same period last year.

Meanwhile, the News Corp [Travel Trend Forecast for July to December 2023](#) has revealed Australians are casting aside cost of living pressures to continue travelling, but are doing so with an eye on price, gaining the best deals and flexibility.

The forecast provides insight into the 11.9 million Australian travellers who engage with News Corp brands every month.

China Visitor Market Recovery For NSW

A total of 3,090,000 passengers passed through Sydney Airport in April 2023, representing an 83.9 per cent recovery compared to pre-pandemic April 2019.

Domestic passenger traffic increased 1.2 per cent year-on-year with 1,963,000 travellers passing through the terminals in April. This represents an 85.9 per cent recovery rate compared to April 2019.

A total of 1,127,000 passengers passed through the T1 International terminal in April, which is more than double the number seen in April 2022 and 80.6 per cent recovered on pre-pandemic April 2019 passenger traffic.

[Find more information here.](#)

Around The Region

Australian Traveller's Top Emerging Towns And Destinations

Check out some North Coast gems...both emerging and established on this '[Top 100 emerging destinations and experiences](#)' list from Australian Traveller.

Emerging Stays

[Sea Sea](#), Crescent Head, NSW

Food and wine

[Murwillumbah](#), NSW,

Culture

[The Banyan](#), Mullumbimby, NSW

Sustainable

[Gumbaynggirr Country](#), Coffs Coast, NSW

[Positive Energy Adventures and Retreats](#), NSW

Coast & Island

[Boomerang Beach](#), NSW

[Clarence Canoe and Kayak Trail](#), NSW

Tweed Destination Management Plan Workshops

The Tweed Tourism Company (TTC) is undertaking a review of the Tweed Destination Management Plan (DMP). The tourism landscape has changed significantly since the last plan in 2019, as such, it is timely to undertake a DMP review and provide a relevant, updated blueprint for the Tweed's tourism sector moving forward.

Two workshops are planned to enable stakeholder input into the new DMP. [Find more information here.](#)

Coffs Coast Champion's Breakfast - Showcasing Tourism Businesses

The next Champion's Breakfast will be held on **Wednesday 21 June**.

All Coffs Coast businesses welcome! To receive event information, please email paradise@coffscoast.com.au.

Wharf St. Distillery Winning Brews

Forster's [Wharf St. Distillery](#) has taken out five medals in this year's San Francisco World Spirits Competition: 2 gold and 3 silver! Their citrus gin placed in the top 3 so they'll be in Las Vegas in June for the announcement of Best In Class 2023 title.

Creek to Coast Featuring Yamba

[7PLUS's Creek to Coast](#) featured Yamba Farmers Market with Deb Novak, stayed at Cardiff Alpaca Farm at Harwood and drove towing campers on Airforce Beach near Evans Head.

RDA Mid North Coast Launch Their Regional Plan

Regional Development Australia Mid North Coast (RDAMNC) are seeking your input on their MNC Strategic Plan 2023-33 during a region wide tour. The plan is designed to be used as a guiding framework to address the region's challenges, needs and priorities for long-term economic growth.

The RDA MNC team will be conducting briefing sessions in every Local Government Area. The launch events will be held at:

- 24 May, Bellingen
- 2 June, Kempsey
- 5 June, Port Macquarie
- 7 June, Taree
- 15 June, Macksville
- 20 June, Coffs Harbour

[Find more informaton here.](#)

Industry Development And Other Opportunities

NSW Tourism Awards Nominations Open

Nominations for the 2023 NSW Tourism Awards are now open, with visitor economy businesses across the state encouraged to apply.

Winners will be revealed during an awards ceremony in Sydney on 8 November 2023 with relevant category winners automatically receiving entry to compete at the Australian Tourism Awards, which will be held in early 2024 in Darwin, Northern Territory. The NSW Tourism Awards are managed by the NSW Tourism Industry Council, powered by Business NSW and supported by Destination NSW. [Find more information here.](#)

ATEC's Accessible & Inclusive Host

ATEC's Accessible and Inclusive Host is a diversity focused business development program with practical learning resources to help you upskill and prepare your business to successfully welcome guests from all life stages, backgrounds and abilities. The program is designed to take you on a three-module journey to build your confidence in working with travellers with access needs. The program will help you understand the needs of travellers with different functional and cognitive impairments, including senior travellers. You will learn what influences their travel decisions and how best to attract and retain members of this large and growing travel segment. [Find more information here.](#)

FREE Instagram for Business Workshop

Alecia Smith will take you through the key elements of using Instagram to grow your business. From creating a compelling profile to curating content and measuring the effectiveness of your marketing efforts, she will cover all the important aspects of using Instagram for business. You will learn how to build a loyal follower base, improve engagement and generate leads that convert into sales.

10am to 2pm, Wednesday 7 June 2023 at Charles Sturt University, Port Macquarie. [Book here.](#)

Entrepreneurship Expo

Come and experience new local small businesses showcasing their products and services, hear from industry experts, leaders and other successful entrepreneurs.

Get your tickets to ETC's FREE Entrepreneurship Expo to experience culture, network, and support your local small business community.

11am - 2pm, Tuesday 20 June 2023 at Southern Cross University, Lismore. [Register here.](#)

Training To Support Event Organisers

[rEVENTS Academy](#) is running a 7-week event management training program from 24 July to 10 September 2023, to help event organisers cope with challenges to ensure their events can remain viable for the long-term. [Find more information here.](#)

Business Connect

Business Connect have a range of upcoming free webinars to support your business as well as many business support resources. [Find a webinar here.](#)

Australian Regional Tourism - Understanding Google Analytics & Upcoming Changes

Are you prepared for what some are calling the Analytics Apocalypse? On the 1st July Google's Universal Analytics (UA) properties will stop collecting data and Google Analytics 4 (GA4) will become the platform for anyone using Google Analytics. Around 6 months after July 1 you will lose access to your universal analytics data. GA4 uses a different data model to UA meaning that when you migrate to GA4 you can only migrate some of your historical data.

[Find out what you need to do in this Webinar](#) on **7 June 2023**. Get top tips on successfully migrating to GA4, how to carry out a painless data extraction from UA and how to run reports that compare data from UA and GA4 and how to store more than 2 months worth of data in GA4.

Funding And Other Opportunities

[Inclusive Beaches Equipment Grants](#)

This 2023/24 season Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) is once again offering Inclusive Beaches Equipment Grants of up to \$1,000 per club around Australia. **Available until funding exhausted.**

Byron Shire Council Grants

- [Events and Festival Sponsorship Program](#): total pool of \$20,000 available this year for grants for community-focused events. **Closes 12 June 2023.**
- [Creative Public Spaces Small Grants](#): \$5,000 Creative Public Spaces Small Grant for temporary creative activations and art projects in the Byron Shire. **Closes 12 June 2023.**

[Opportunity To Host An Onsite Public EV Fast Charger](#)

Businesses, commercial property owners and managers, local councils as well as site operators and owners across NSW will have the chance to be part of a world-class charging network.

Expressions of Interest (EOI) are now open for site hosts. EOIs for sites identified as optimal zones on the [NSW EV fast charging master plan map](#) will be favourably received. However, applications are still welcomed from sites not in one of the identified optimal zones. **Closes 30 June 2023.**

[Growing Regions Program](#)

Grant guidelines have now been released for the first round of the Australian Government's new \$600 million Growing Regions Program, with **expressions of interest to open on July 5** this year. The program will invest in critical regional infrastructure and community projects across regional and rural Australia through two \$300 million funding rounds - with a second round to follow Round 1. Local government entities and not-for-profit organisations will be able to apply for grants of between \$500,000 and \$15 million through the program, which will be open, competitive and merit-based.

North Coast Product Development

[Social Alley Diner](#) - South West Rocks

The Social Alley Diner boasts tasty dishes with personality and a hint of American fanfare. Featuring a retro vintage look and feel to the space, Social Alley boasts a six-lane black bowling alley, plus diner and sports bar.

[Grumpys Rock Café](#) - Grafton

Wonderfully unique café located within the South Grafton Emporium.

[M|Arts](#) - Murwillumbah

Art and creative space M|Arts has announced a new Pop-Up Bar collaborating with Black Hops Brewing. Officially launched on Friday 5 May, the Pop-Up Bar will also feature Husk Distillers' spirits and Natural order Wines

[Treehouse Winter Retreats](#) - Diamond Waters

New health and wellbeing retreats at 'The Fernery' at Treehouse which celebrates a collaboration with local producers to deliver a 1 or 2 day retreat programs with topics including immersive women's health, indigenous culture, forest bathing, meditation and yoga.

[Goanna Lennox](#) - Lennox Head

Lennox Head's newest cafe restaurant, is founded by two experienced chefs and together, they hope to build on their previous experiences and create a warm and welcoming space where everyone can gather and enjoy delicious, nourishing meals.

[Poulette Rotisserie](#) - Forster

New restaurant in Forster highlighting French retro charm, classic nostalgia and style combined with premium quality and locally sourced produce. And putting a spin on perfectly cooked chicken - hot, juicy and mighty delicious!

[Valley E-bikes](#) - Murwillumbah

New tourism operator Valley E-Bikes offers bikes to enjoy the Tweed section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail.

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](#).

[Jump For Koalas Day](#)

Jump for Koalas Day is a collaboration with [WildNets Adventure Park](#) at [Guulabaa, Place of Koala](#) in Cowarra State Forest. On Sunday, 100% of proceeds from all bookings will be donated to Koala Conservation Australia and the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital. The funds will support the care and conservation of wild koalas, including the rescue, rehabilitation and release of injured and sick koalas and the world first Wild Koala Breeding Program. **28 May 2023.**

[Bellingen Memorial Hall Grand Reopening](#)

The much-anticipated series of performances curated to mark the completion of the Bellingen Memorial Hall makeover, has been relaunched.

Following a postponement earlier this year, the multi-arts performance programme now spans six nights showcasing theatre, film, classical music, comedy and contemporary music. Bookings are essential for each event in the series. Tickets are free of charge, with a \$2 per person gold coin donation requested on entry. **29 May to 3 June 2023.**

[Saltwater Freshwater](#)

The Saltwater Freshwater festival is the Mid North Coast's annual cultural festival which includes entertainment, workshops, market stalls and cultural exhibitions. **3 June 2023.**

[ArtWalk 2023](#)

ArtWalk is an annual event held in Port Macquarie that celebrates the town's vibrant art scene. The event brings together local artists and art enthusiasts for a night of exploring, discovering, and experiencing art in all its forms. ArtWalk is not just an event for art lovers, but also for those who appreciate the culture, history, and creativity of Port Macquarie. It is a unique opportunity to immerse oneself in the town's creative spirit, connect with local artists, and support the growth of the local arts scene. **9 June 2023.**

[Sip And Savour - Port Macquarie](#)

This 'Taste of the region' festival celebrates local food, drink, arts and entertainment. Live music acts feature The Rubens (Sat) & Thelma Plum (Sun). **9-11 June 2023.**

[Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival](#)

The Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival is one of the most unique and exciting regional literary festivals in Australia. Held annually the BRWF has welcomed some of the most respected and innovative writers, public figures, politicians and performers to the Mid North Coast. **9-12 June 2023.**



[Clarence Valley Camp Oven Festival](#)

A packed entertainment line-up for families and lovers of the great Aussie outdoors has been announced for the 8th Clarence Valley Camp Oven Festival set to run over the June long weekend at Nymboida Camping and Canoeing in Nymboida.

Costa Giorgiadis, along with his mate Scrapboy, will appear as Costa the Garden Gnome. Together they dive into their grubby bucket to inspire kids through a series of workshops, games and creative outdoor activities to nurture their love for the natural world. **9-12 June 2023.**

[GeoQuest 48hr](#)

South West Rocks is hosting this year's Mountain Designs GeoQuest 48hr. The event is the ultimate test of your physical and mental limits, including disciplines of trekking, mountain biking, and kayaking. **9-12 June 2023.**

[Hastings Farm Gate Tour](#)

Celebration of quality locally grown produce. A self-drive tour allows participants to tailor their experience and visit host properties to sample the best produce of the region and learn more about regenerative and sustainable farming techniques. **10 - 12 June 2023.**

[Olley 100](#)

Tweed Regional Art Gallery and Margaret Olley Arts Centre are celebrating the 100 year Birthday anniversary of Margaret Olley with a series of celebrations including a gala dinner and exhibitions. **24 June 2023.**
