



North Coast News & Views No. 165

2023 North Coast Tourism Symposium and Tourism Awards

Destination North Coast is pleased to confirm the **2023 North Coast Tourism Symposium** will be held at the [Mantra on Salt Beach, Kingscliff](#), **Thursday 27 July, 2023**.

The day-time industry conference will once again bring forth a jam-packed program of thought-leaders and trend analysts, topic experts and tourism trailblazers.

The theme of this year's Symposium is '**Redefining Normal**' with the draft program to be released in the coming weeks. Buckle up as it is going to be a cracker!

Please put this must-attend event in your diary.

The logo consists of a square divided into four quadrants. The top-left quadrant is dark green with a white circle. The top-right quadrant is light green with a white circle. The bottom-left quadrant is dark green with a white circle. The bottom-right quadrant is light green with a white circle.

NORTH COAST TOURISM AWARDS

A return of the **North Coast Tourism Awards** (and festive gala event) will follow and presents a highly anticipated opportunity for celebrating and rewarding success. Details to follow shortly regarding the application and judging process so watch this space.

Tickets will go on sale soon and we look forward to reigniting our collective passion for North Coast tourism, sharing insights and experiences, and celebrating returned confidence of our industry and the North Coast visitor economy.

[Find more information here.](#)

Shortlist Announced For 2023 National Trust (NSW) Heritage Awards

The [National Trust Heritage Awards](#) is an annual celebration of outstanding practice, awarding excellence in conservation of Aboriginal, built, natural or cultural heritage. The shortlist for the 29th annual Awards has been announced and features more than 40 rich and diverse heritage projects across NSW.

Among the entries shortlisted are the Northern Rivers Rail Trail - Tweed section (entered by Tweed Shire Council) and SHINE - Shining a Light on our Heritage and Museums - entered by Arts Mid North Coast Inc. [View the full shortlist here.](#)

The winners will be announced at an awards ceremony on 12 May 2023



Most Aussies Plan To Travel In 2023

The American Express 2023 Global Travel Trends Report has revealed Australians plan to spend an average of \$7740 on their holidays this year. Nearly every Australian (97 per cent) said they planned on taking at least one trip in 2023. [Read the report here.](#)

Connect To Country Edition 4 Released

The fourth edition of [Connect to Country](#), a digital publication presented by Tourism Australia's Signature Experiences collective, [Discover Aboriginal Experiences](#), was recently released. The publication includes information about sleeping off-grid and under the stars, how Aboriginal communities have embraced conservation practices for millennia, Indigenous indulgence teaming culture with five-star comfort and the significance of Tourism Australia's dual naming initiatives. The publication features engaging first person stories, captivating videos and images delivered in an enjoyable format that showcase the diversity of Aboriginal guided experiences and cultures in Australia.



Tourism Industry Insights

International Student Arrivals Grow

The latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics confirms almost 143,000 students arrived in February, 93,270 more than in the same month last year. Provisional estimates indicate a further 54,350 students entered Australia in March. Universities Australia acting Chief Executive Peter Chesworth said: "Education is a serious economic driver and added more than \$40 billion to the economy pre-COVID-19, helping to pay for the essential services Australians need and enjoy." [Find more information here.](#)

Spending Surges In Hotels & Bars

The Australian Bureau of Statistics Monthly Household Spending Indicator for February 2023 shows spending in NSW hotels, bars and restaurants rose 26.1 per cent, while transport rose 25.5 per cent. Across Australia, household spending rose 11.8 per cent in February compared to the same time last year. Robert Ewing, ABS head of business indicators, said this represented slower growth in household spending, as Australians continued to adjust to cost of living pressures. [Find more information here.](#)

Cost Vs Conscience: Sustainable Tourism In 2023

The latest sustainability report from Booking.com shows that sustainable tourism is continuing to gain momentum, and consumers are eager to make more eco-friendly travel choices. [Find more information here.](#)

Around The Region

Take 3 For the Sea

[Observatory Apartments](#) in Coffs Harbour launched an Easter school holiday program with an environmental twist. Partnering with 'Take 3 for the Sea', kids are being encouraged to pick up three pieces of rubbish from the beach - in return for a sweet treat. [See the story on NBN News here.](#)

Nominate Yourself - Business, Industry and Visitor Economy Strategy Engagement

Byron Shire Council are developing a Business, Industry and Visitor Economy Strategy which aims to provide

a clear direction for a resilient, adaptable, and sustainable economy. They are seeking expressions of interest for people to join a small focus group discussions of one to two hours on 29, 30 or 31 May 2023. The aim of the focus groups is to share insights and feedback on research findings. Nominate yourself by [completing the form by Sunday 30 April 2023](#).

Bonza Hits The Skies

[Bonza](#) launched its Port Macquarie service recently, with the new route to run twice weekly from the Sunshine Coast on Wed and Sat. The low-cost carrier will also launch twice weekly flights to Port Macquarie from its second base at Melbourne Airport. The new route is the 16th to launch as Bonza progresses towards having all 27 routes in action by 23 May. Flights to the Coffs Coast from the Sunshine Coast commenced 20 April 2023.

Lismore's Destination Management and Visitor Economy Strategy

Lismore City Council is developing a Destination Management and Visitor Economy Strategy.

As a tourism industry representative, your insight, attitudes and opinions are valuable to help them shape the future of the visitor economy, including increasing length of stay, visitor spend, and visitor dispersal throughout Lismore, Nimbin and Villages. [Please complete the survey by 19th May 2023](#).

Industry Development And Other Opportunities

Reboot Your Digital Skills

Free, weekly Reboot webinars aimed to sharpen your digital content skills and grow your customers and brand. Listen to leading business experts and hear their inspiring stories. Learn practical tips across a range of relevant business topics, plus live workshopping with small business owners on their business issues. [Find more information here](#).

Funding And Other Opportunities

[Safework Small Business Rebate](#)

If you are a small business owner in NSW, this \$1,000 rebate will help you purchase safety items to improve work health and safety for you and your workers. **Ongoing.**

[Strategic Opportunities Program](#)

This program supports individual initiatives and events that demonstrate long-term benefits to the NSW screen industry. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis at any time during the year, subject to available funds. To be considered for funding, project ideas need to be discussed with Screen NSW prior to submission. Please contact [Amelia Carew-Reid](#). **Ongoing.**

[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.**

North Coast Product Development

[Port Macquarie Distillery](#)

Small batch boutique distillery with locally made gin. Their new pink gin 'Town Beach' has recently been released and the distillery is open for tastings and sales.

[Kelp Restaurant - Ballina](#)

Kelp is a new offering from the Dory's takeaway team - who affectionately call Kelp the big sister. With it's snazzy bar, cool atmosphere and open aspect it's a great spot to linger over a cocktail or tuck into a bucket of prawns.

[Free Spirit Cruises - Forster](#)

Free Spirit Cruises are now offering a leisurely 2.5 hour sunset cruise with 2 or 3 course meal, prepared by their onboard chef each Saturday, as well as their daily cruising options.

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](#).

[Coffs Food Lovers Long Lunch](#)

Gather your food loving friends to enjoy an Autumn menu created by Chefs Ben Wilson & Scott Tarlinton at WYLDE OAK Café. **29 April 2023.**

[BananaFest](#)

Three shows over 2 days featuring the creme of Australian music talent, children's entertainment icons, street performers and food delights. Tickets include entry and all rides in The Big Banana Fun Park. **6-7 May 2023.**



[Know Your Producer Dinner](#)

Visit Cassegrain's Winery for scrumptious showcase of local produce from the Port Macquarie-Hastings area and a fundraiser for the annual Hastings Farm Gate Tour (June 10th-12th 2023). Bookings essential **6 May 2023.**

[Full Moon Wine Festival](#)

Taste and chat with some of Australia's foremost thinkers of natural wine, making your way through 30 different producers from around the country under one roof, Full Moon is a community coming together to celebrate the joy of wine, great farming practices, and to have a party at the Eltham Hotel. **6 May 2023.**

[Nimbin Aquarius Festival 50th Anniversary](#)

The 50th anniversary of the Nimbin Aquarius Festival welcomes people to come together, contribute and celebrate the spirit of Aquarius.



The ten-themed days will initiate conversations supported by workshops, Celebration, Music, Performance, Dance, Food and much more.

12-21 May 2023.

[Lismore GemFest](#)

Australia's largest annual gem and mineral show comes to Lismore over two days. Over 140 stalls and dealers over two massive days, displaying minerals, gems, fossils, jewellery and equipment from all over the world. **20-21 May 2023.**

[Storyland Music Festival](#)

STORYLAND '23 will take place on Gumbaynggirr Country, Coffs Harbour at Park Beach Reserve. A new world will be set, and they're inviting you to join. **20 May 2023.**

[10th Anniversary of Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens](#)

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Official Opening in 2013, Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens are holding an Open Day. Guided Walks, nursery native plant sales, children's activities, educational displays, self-guided walks will feature. **28 May 2023.**
