



North Coast News & Views No. 168

2023 North Coast Tourism Symposium - 27 July 2023

Preparations are in full swing for the events of the year (!) and we look forward to welcoming stakeholders from across and beyond the region to the North Coast Tourism Symposium and North Coast Tourism Awards Gala Dinner being held in The Tweed on Thursday 27 July 2023.

Destination North Coast is delighted to be collaborating with destination co-host, [Tweed Tourism Co.](#) to deliver these events.

The theme of this year's North Coast Tourism Symposium is *Redefining Normal*.

We are pleased to release the [Preliminary Draft Program](#). Check out the plethora of quality speakers all experts in their field and who are sure to deliver on the promise of an 'anything but normal' conference!

As a major sponsor of this year's North Coast Tourism Symposium, [Peppers Salt Resort and Spa, Kingscliff](#) is also the conference venue. Peppers are offering [special rates for Symposium delegates](#). We encourage you to book soon as accommodation is filling fast and there are a limited number of rooms available at the special conference rate.

This year we are also offering an opportunity to experience the region's newest attraction, the [Northern Rivers Rail Trail](#), with a special ride for Symposium delegates on Wednesday afternoon, 26 July 2023!

We'll meet at Murwillumbah Railway Station at 1pm and set off at your own pace, taking in the scenery, bridges, tunnels and points of interest along the 24km journey. At [Hosanna Farmstay](#), halfway along the Trail, join Destination North Coast and the Tweed Tourism Company team for refreshments and before transport is provided to take riders back to Murwillumbah. There's a small but heavily subsidised fee to join this activity.

Don't delay! [Book your three-for-one event tickets now](#).

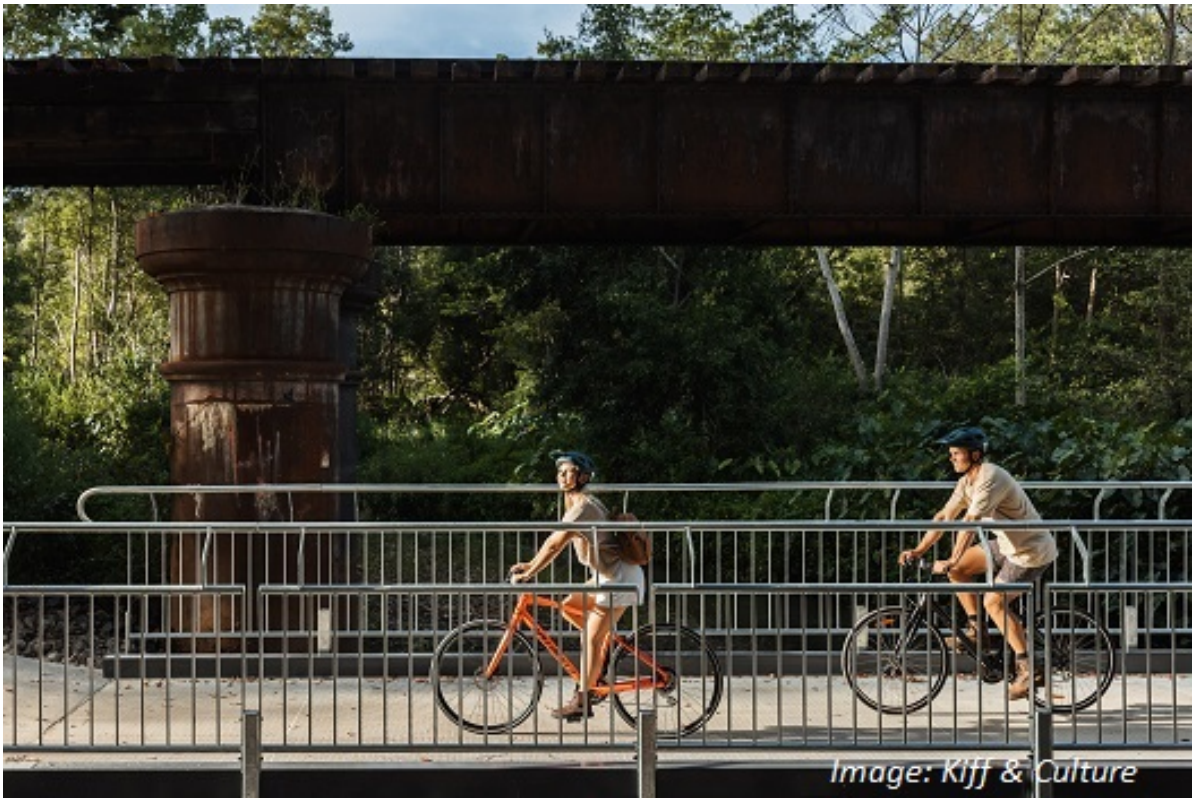


Image: Kiff & Culture



Image: Kiff & Culture



Destination North Coast and the Tweed Tourism Co. are also offering special wellness activities prior to Symposium on the morning of Thursday 27 July. The sessions will run concurrently from 6.30am to 7.30am.

Select one when [buying your Tourism Symposium ticket](#) to get your day off to a great start.

North Coast Tourism Awards

Entries for the 2023 North Coast Tourism Awards have now closed. We were thrilled to receive 95 nominations across the 17 categories. Judging has now commenced, with finalists to be announced on 23 June 2023.

Tickets for the Awards Gala Dinner at [Plantation House](#) are selling fast, so get in early to ensure your attendance as numbers are limited.

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



NORTH COAST
TOURISM AWARDS



Powered by
**BUSINESS
NSW**

Calling All Accommodation Providers

With the cost of living continuing to increase, DNC are endeavouring to assess what impact this issue is having on the commercial accommodation sector and wider visitor economy for the North Coast. The intel gathered through the following survey will help us to assist operators and to advocate on your behalf.

Please take 5 minutes and [complete the survey.](#)

Great North Coast Trail Feasibility Study

As a reminder, Destination North Coast was successful in our application with the Department of Regional NSW's [Business Case and Strategy Development Fund](#) to assess the Viability of Development of a Great North Coast Trail, stretching from the Newcastle to the Tweed.

The Great North Coast Trail is a regionally significant project that if feasible, would connect the existing network of high-quality walking and nature-based experiences along the NSW North Coast. It would link existing well-known and developed walking tracks like Yuraygir Coastal Walk and the Solitary Islands Coastal Walk with lesser-known, under-developed stretches of the coastline to become a true long-distance walking track and stand-out nature-based experience with broad appeal.

[TRC Tourism](#), specialists in tourism, trails feasibility assessments and business cases, have been engaged to complete the study on what the experience may look like, who are the target markets and whether the business case shows it is feasible and economically sound. Ideally and in consideration of likely popular usage, they will consider 2-to-4-day premium walking opportunities linked by trails connecting the length of the coast. A governance model will also need to be considered as part of this project.



We are in the process of coordinating four in-region workshops (Forster, Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour and Byron Bay, week beginning 19th June 2023) with the aim of seeking early views on the opportunities for the proposed Trail, possible alignments, existing product strengths that we can utilise, and barriers that have to be considered.

These workshops are aimed at being small and targeted to individuals with a particular interest in trail development, long distance hiking or the outdoor sector, to ensure we can collectively and collaboratively understand the vision and opportunity.

If this is you, please [reach out directly to DNC](#) for more information.

Interested stakeholders can also complete this [online survey](#) so we capture your views and opinion.

NSW's Top Tourism Towns For 2023

Congratulations to Newcastle, Huskisson and Berry on being named the winners of NSW's Top Tourism Towns for 2023.

A record-breaking 18,000 people voted for their favourite towns this year, with the winners announced during last week's Local Government NSW Destination and Visitor Economy Conference.

Managed by the NSW Tourism Industry Council, the awards celebrate towns across three population categories: under 1500, between 1500 and 5000, and over 5000 residents.

Special shout-out to Bulahdelah on the MidCoast who received the Judges' Commendation in the Top Small Tourism Town category (population between 1,500 and 5,000 residents).

[View the full list of winners here.](#)

Changes To Australia's Working Holiday Maker Program And The UK's Youth Mobility Scheme

Last week, the Australia-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement (A-UKFTA) entered into force, commencing new arrangements under Australia's Working Holiday Maker (WHM) program and the UK's Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS).

For UK passport holders who apply for Australia's Working Holiday visa, the new arrangements will see an increase in the eligible age range and removal of specified work requirements including:

- From 1 July 2023, UK passport holders will be able to apply for a Working Holiday visa between the ages of 18 and 35 years inclusive. This is a five-year increase from the current maximum age of 30 years inclusive.
- From 1 July 2024, UK passport holders will be eligible to be granted Working Holiday visas up to a total of three years without having to meet any specified work requirements.

[Read media release.](#)

Repairs Underway For Lismore Region Tourist Attractions

Local and tourists will find it easier and safer to visit and enjoy two iconic reserves in the Lismore region with the NSW Government to invest \$100,000 in repairs and upgrades to Hanging Rock Falls and Bean Creek Falls.

At Bean Creek Falls, which is a short drive off the Clarence Way south of Urbenville, \$50,000 will be invested to repair the lookout and restore the adjacent walkway and carpark. The work will open up the lookout to more visitors by upgrading the track to the site.

At Hanging Rock Falls between Kyogle and Nimbin, visitors will find it easier and safer to enjoy the reserve with \$50,000 to be invested in repair work on the track to the popular spot. Hanging Rock Falls is a drawcard for nature lovers with its stunning waterfall and water up to seven metres deep, surrounded by lush rainforest and rocky cliffs.

[Read media release.](#)



Koala Habitat Near Port Macquarie Now Protected

4,500 hectares of bushland containing koala-preferred habitat near Port Macquarie, will be protected forever following its purchase by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). The property, located west of Port Macquarie and within the traditional lands of the Biripi nation, occupies a critical position between four existing NPWS reserves and between two known koala populations at Comboyne and South Kempsey.

The property is already home to between 30 and 60 koalas. The land also provides suitable habitat for at least 45 threatened species, including the endangered Hasting River mouse and the spotted-tailed quoll, hollow-dependent species such as the greater glider, and a range of birds including the glossy black cockatoo and wompoo fruit-dove.

The Mid North Coast is home to two of the ten stronghold koala populations in NSW.

Acquisition of the property was funded under the NSW Koala Strategy.

[Read media release.](#)

New Legislation For Creative Workers

The Creative Australia Bill 2023 has been introduced, establishing two new bodies within Creative Australia, the Federal Government's principal arts investment and advisory body. Music Australia will deliver support and investment, while Creative Workplaces will raise and set workplace standards.

[Read media release.](#)

Active Transport Funding Success

A renewed Get NSW Active program will deliver funding to more than 80 walking and cycling projects across the state. Get NSW Active will provide \$39.5 million in funding to 50 councils to deliver projects that will encourage walking and bike riding in their area. Upgrades include new footpaths, new cycleways and improved safety features. The new round of funding includes \$13.6 million for regional projects.

Visit the website for a [full list of successful applicants](#).

Tourism Industry Insights

State Of The Industry Report

Tourism Research Australia (TRA) has released the [State of the Industry 2022](#) report. This annual report presents a snapshot of Australia's visitor economy in 2022.

The pandemic had a major impact on the visitor economy. In 2022, the recovery gained momentum and broadened across a wider range of segments. International visitation increased strongly, off an extremely low level. Domestic travel demand also improved, and domestic visitor spend rose above its pre-pandemic level.

Digital Health Check

[Tourism Tribe](#) recently conducted a 57-point assessment of the digital footprint of 1,400 tourism businesses which includes key assets such as website, Google Business Profile, Local Search, SEO, TripAdvisor, Facebook and Instagram. They found:

- There is **A LOT** of room for improvement in the industry! Most businesses only scored *above average* for 2 out of the 13 criteria
- Tripadvisor has the second lowest score despite being the **go-to platform for travellers** looking to get information!
- Facebook has the lowest score even though it is still the **most widely used** social media platform (almost 3 billion users!!)

Find out how your business measures up by undertaking a Digital Health Check. [Find more information here](#).

Travel App Usage Rises In Australia

Ipsos iris rankings have revealed the Easter and April school holidays saw 16.9 million Australians aged 14+ use a travel website or app. Uber was the number one travel site used in April, followed by Qantas Airways, TripAdvisor, Booking.com, Virgin Australia, Airbnb, Jetstar, news.com.au (travel) and Expedia. The 25 to 39-year-old age group was the largest cohort online, while people aged 40 to 54 spent the most time online in April. [Read the report here](#).

Around The Region

NSW Hotels Named Best In South Pacific

[Pinetrees Lodge](#) on Lord Howe Island has been named Top Hotel in the South Pacific in the Tripadvisor 2023 Travellers' Choice Best of the Best Hotel Awards. Fewer than one per cent of Tripadvisor's eight million listings are awarded Best of the Best ratings, signifying the highest level of excellence in hospitality. Other NSW hotels on the list are The Remington in Muswellbrook at number four, while Little National Hotel Sydney was at number 10. [See the full list here](#).

Tweed's Museum On Wheels Wins Coveted AMAGA Award

The Tweed Regional Museum's Museum on Wheels (MoW), a colourful vintage caravan with a twist, has won the major award for Community Engagement and Outreach from the Australian Museum and Gallery Association (AMaGA). The award recognises organisations that have developed unique and engaging ways to interpret and communicate their collection and stories to the wider community.

The MoW is a renovated 1973 caravan - retrofitted to showcase images and video content from the Tweed Regional Museum collection - and is used to activate sites and communities across the Tweed and beyond. The MoW transports the Museum into the public realm, showcasing curated content, enhancing locations, exhibitions, festivals, schools, events and engaging with current and new audiences. [Read media release](#).



Yaru Water

The Tweed's [Yaru Water](#) is now proudly stocked on Qantas. Qantas [created this video](#) to share the news. Yaru is Australia's first Indigenous water company and was established in 2011 through a partnership between the Martin family and Bundjalung descendants of Northern NSW. Since Yaru began, they have been proudly Supply Nation Certified.

Oaks Santai Resort

[Oaks Santai Resort](#) in the Tweed has undergone a \$3.4 million refurbishment of both its guest rooms and common areas, offering guests an elevated and contemporary holiday experience when staying at the resorts. They have just been recognised as the "Best of the Best" at the esteemed 2023 Trip Advisor Travellers Choice Awards. Minor Hotels had 14 of its Australian and New Zealand properties recognised as the 'Best of the Best' at the 2023 Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Awards. [See more here.](#)

Industry Development And Other Opportunities

DNC Industry Networking Event - Ballina

The Destination North Coast Board traditionally rotates around the region for our monthly Board meetings and we have pleasure in planning our June meeting to be in Ballina.

After the Board meeting, we invite members of the Tourism Industry to a casual get-together and an opportunity to meet and network with the Board, the DNC team and industry peers.

- What: Afternoon Industry Networking
- When: Wednesday, 14 June 2023
- Time: 5.15pm-6.45pm
- Where: [Ramada Ballina](#), 2 Martin St, Ballina

[RSVP is required by Friday 9 June, 2023](#) and for catering purposes, please include any dietary restrictions.

We look forward to connecting with industry in region and meeting in Ballina.

REMINDER - NSW Tourism Awards Nominations Closing Soon

Nominations for the 2023 NSW Tourism Awards close **Wednesday 21 June 2023** with visitor economy businesses across the North Coast encouraged to apply.

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.](#)

Coffs Coast Champions Breakfast

At the Coffs Coast Champions Breakfast local businesses will speak about their new products, offerings and updates in a relaxed and casual setting at King Tide Brewery on 21 June 2023. This valuable information is perfect for sharing with your customers (locals and visitors) and staff.

All businesses are welcome. [Register here.](#)

Register For Tourism Australia's June Industry Webinar

Tourism Australia will hold its next Industry Webinar at 11am, Friday 23 June. The update will include insights from industry along with an update from Tourism Australia's Managing Director Phillipa Harrison. [Register to attend here.](#)

Dreamtime 2023

Registrations are now open for Dreamtime, Tourism Australia's signature biennial incentive showcase, designed to increase awareness of Australia as an outstanding incentive destination. The event provides the Australian business events industry the opportunity to connect with qualified incentive buyers from around the world, while showcasing Australia's best incentive experiences and products. [Find more information here.](#)

Tourism Tribe FREE Quick-wins Webinars

[Tourism Tribe](#) are offering FREE webinars to support tourism businesses elevate their digital and social media performance. [Find out more here](#) and register to attend individual sessions.

Funding And Other Opportunities

NSW Grants And Funding Finder

Business owners across the state can now enjoy the same convenience as individuals when trying to navigate the range of financial help available from the NSW Government, with more than 500 grant and funding offerings accessible from one easy-to-use webpage. The [NSW Grants and Funding Finder](#) is a one-stop shop for people to locate the financial support they need, when they need it, by bringing together savings, rebates and budget relief from 46 separate government websites into one place. [Read media release.](#)

[First Nations Tourism Mentoring Program \(FNTMP\)](#)

The FNTMP provides First Nations tourism businesses with access to free, tailored and one-one-one mentoring services from experienced tourism industry professionals. The program is flexible and can be delivered to fit around commitments. Businesses can choose how often and how long they meet with mentors, including via face-to-face and virtual, depending on preferences. **Closes 16 June 2023.**

[Strengthening Business](#)

Strengthening Business is a service under the AusIndustry Entrepreneurs' Programme that connects you with experts to make your business stronger, more resilient and better prepared for the future. **Closes 30 June 2023.**

[Regional Small Business Support Program](#)

This program provides financial counselling and related services to small regional businesses facing hardship due to drought, the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2019-20 bushfires and flooding events in 2022 and 2023. **Closes 30 June 2023.**

[Sustainability Advantage NSW](#)

Sustainability Advantage provides medium to large businesses with advice, training, education and networking opportunities to help develop their environmental sustainability and reduce costs. **Ongoing.**

[Women in Business NSW](#)

Women in Business provides women living or working in New South Wales with access to a fully subsidised online program to help them establish a new small business or consolidate an existing small business. **Ongoing.**

North Coast Product Development

[NEW Nambucca Farmers Markets](#)

The team from [Matilda's](#) are hosting a small weekly Nambucca Farmers Market - for food lovers and growers! The first market day is June 29th, 2:30pm-5:30pm and then weekly on Thursday.

[Billy T BnB - Stroud](#)

This self-contained accommodation in the heart of Stroud is a newly renovated 3-bedroom flat tucked behind Billy T Café.

[Boucan Diner - Lennox Head](#)

Boucan Diner has recently opened at the old Lennox Pizza location and serves up Tex Mex-style food, craft BBQ slow cooked meats, sauces and sides with catering options available.

[The Med Crescent Head](#)

A variety of accommodation styles are available to suit every need and budget from a wedding party of 50 people to a family gathering of 6 to 8, or simply a quick overnight stop for one or two.

[Full O' Beans Cafe - Gloucester](#)

Gloucester has a new kid on the block bringing café favourites with a healthy twist, leaving enough room for a sweet treat afterwards. Sushi tacos anyone?

[Byron Bay Eco Cruises](#)

[Out of the Blue Adventures](#) owner Dean Fuchs has taken over ownership of Byron Bay Eco Cruises. They currently have the boat off the water for maintenance and renovations and will return with cruises in the springtime.

[Balnea Sauna & Recovery - Murwillumbah](#)

Murwillumbah's Sauna and Recovery Centre offering Traditional Sauna, Infrared Sauna, Full Spectrum Infrared Sauna, Magnesium Cold Plunge, Hot Spa, Compression Therapy, Stretch Therapy, Injury Recovery and Massage.

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](#).

[LisAmore!](#)

Celebrating the Northern Rivers region's historical connection to northern Italy while strengthening Sister City ties with Conegliano and Vittoria Veneto, LisAmore! is a wonderful excuse to gather friends and family together. **17-18 June 2023.**



[Lismore Lantern Parade](#)

This year sees 29 years of the Lantern Parade in the heart of Lismore city. The theme this year is "Gates of Renewal" which reflects the history of the lantern parade which celebrates Winter Solstice, the change from the longest nights to the return of the sun - known as liminal space, where optimism and magic happen. The day will commence at noon in the heart of the CBD for the Market deLight. Wander around the city to see the Enchanted Windows and LisAmore! themed eateries and visit the Heartbeats Stage in Carrington Street. **24 June 2023.**

[Sawtell Chilli Festival](#)

Attracting over 13,000 people on the day, the Chilli Festival features over 70 chilli related and market stalls. Offering a variety of foods and flavours from some of Australia's leading chilli product manufacturers as well as local restaurants and cafes showcasing their own famous cuisine. **1 July 2023.**

[Evans Head Fishing Classic](#)

The annual Evans Head Fishing Classic draws visitors to experience all that the North Coast has to offer. **30 June - 7th July 2023.**
