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## North Coast News & Views No. 169

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### Nature-Based Tourism Rebounds In NSW

Destination NSW has released a new report - [Domestic Nature-Based Tourism in NSW](#) - that reveals the state welcomed 29.6 million domestic visitors seeking outdoor and nature experiences in 2022, up more than 35.% on 2021.

Nature-based tourism is a market segment based around outdoor and nature experiences. It includes activities such as visiting national parks, whale or dolphin watching, going to the beach, visiting botanical gardens, visiting farms, bushwalking and/or rainforest walks, visiting wildlife parks, zoos and/or aquariums and bird watching. Natural beauty and wildlife are important factors for domestic and international visitors when choosing a holiday destination.

Of notable interest in the report, the North Coast is NSW's top regional destination for nature-based domestic overnight tourism.



## 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 2022.

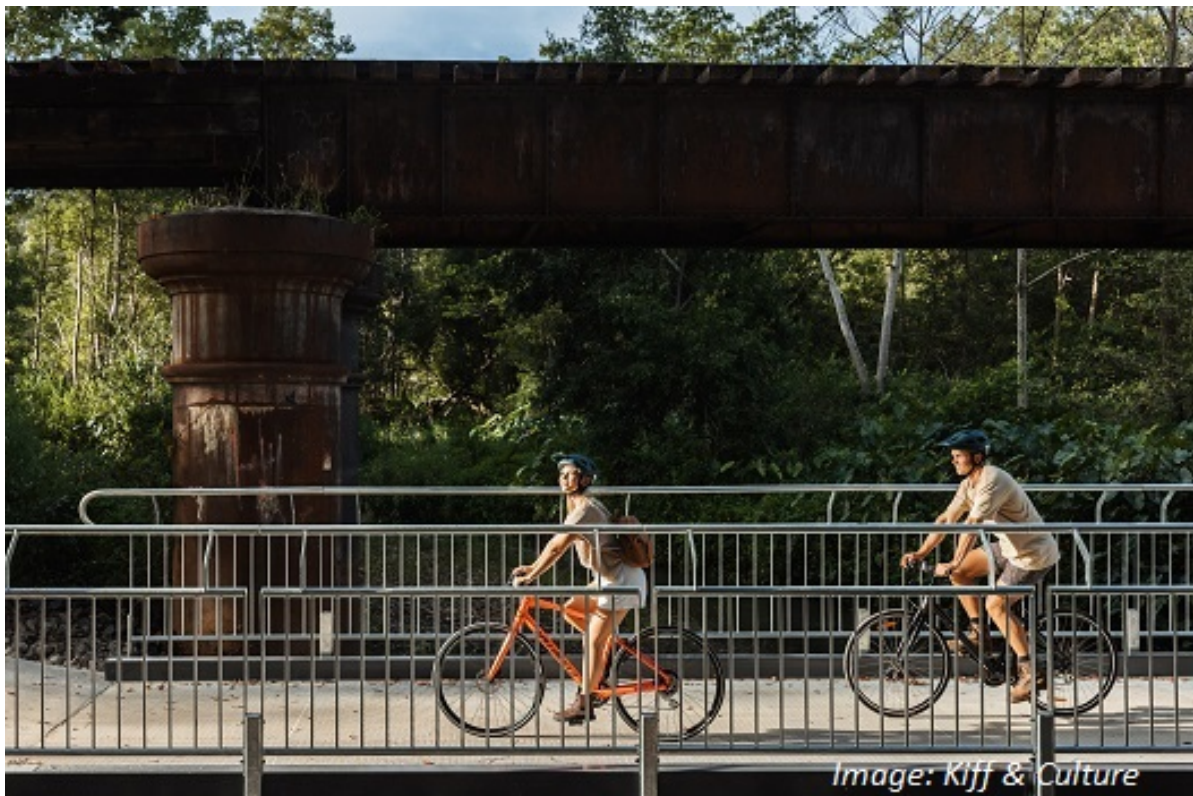
Destination North Coast is delighted to be collaborating with destination co-host, [Tweed Tourism Co.](#) to deliver these events.

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

If you haven't already done so, check out the recently released [Preliminary Draft Program](#) featuring a 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! Find more detail when you [book your ticket](#).





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.

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## Festivals Funding To Support Regional Artists And Events

The Federal Government is supporting a place for every story and a story for every place, with new funding for a range of arts project at festivals across the country. Close to \$700,000 in funding will be shared among 17 projects in regional and rural communities through the Festivals Australia program.

[Read media release.](#)

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## Walks Near Me Digital Maps

Discovering great new walks and public spaces across the state has never been easier with the launch of a new online tool to connect people to iconic locations, including parks, beaches, libraries, museums, and exciting high streets.

The free *Walks Near Me* interactive digital map has thousands of opportunities to discover great public spaces across the state and create bespoke walking itineraries to visit them.

The tool brings together spatial data from across the state into a single digital tool which can be found on the [nsw.gov.au](http://nsw.gov.au) website and is optimised for mobile phone use. People can create personalised walks, then save and share their favourites with their friends and family.

The new tool is home to more than 800 walks and offers a range of resources, including sharing the stories and history of a park or region, discovering events, and informing people about the amenities and experiences available.

The *Walks Near Me* digital map will be updated regularly on points of interest and route options.

Walks Near Me was developed in partnership between Transport for NSW and the Department of Customer Service's OneCX Program, which makes it easier to find, use, and understand information from the NSW Government.

The Walks Near Me interactive tool [can be found here](#).

[Read media release.](#)





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### **Tourism Pilot For People With Disability**

The Federal Government has announced that organisations across Australia will share in \$3 million to promote greater workforce participation for people with disability to work in the visitor economy.

[Find more information here.](#)

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## Disaster Ready Fund Projects Announced

NSW will be better protected and prepared for future disasters following the announcement of 19 projects funded under Round One of the Federal Government's new Disaster Ready Fund. They include delivery of risk reduction equipment, a critical evacuation centre and early warning systems in Western NSW; works to reduce flood and erosion risks in the Lismore river catchment on the North Coast; and strategic partnerships with Aboriginal communities and organisations to reduce the risk and impact of disasters.

[See the full list of successful projects here.](#)

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## More Than \$4 Million For Art And Culture

More than 1.2 million people across NSW will experience a range of cultural activities and programs thanks to an investment of more than \$4.1 million from the NSW Government's Arts and Cultural Funding Program. NSW artists and organisations submitted a total of 424 applications, making this latest round of funding one of the largest from the sector in both volume and value. The 45% increase compared to the previous year signals the NSW arts and cultural sector is experiencing a resurgence in confidence to create exceptional art and cultural programs again after the disruption of COVID-19. Congratulations to all the North Coast successful grant applicants.

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

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## Tourism Industry Insights

### TRA Monthly Snapshot

Tourism Research Australia's (TRA's) [monthly snapshot for March 2023](#) has been released. This report compares the month of March 2023 with the pre-pandemic month of March 2019. March 2023 saw nights away and spend exceed pre-pandemic levels in Australia. Spend was up 32% (\$2.1 billion) on March 2019 to \$8.5 billion. Visitors spent 31.7 million nights away, which was up 4% compared to March 2019. Domestic overnight spend in NSW was up 27% on 2019.

TRA also produces [quarterly](#) and [annual](#) summaries.

### Quarterly Tourism Labour Statistics

Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows there were 727,200 tourism jobs in Australia during the March quarter of 2023 (up 6.4% year on year), accounting for one in 21 (4.8%) filled jobs in the economy. There were 30,300 (-4%) less jobs than December quarter 2019, prior to COVID-19. The industries that recorded the largest quarterly changes were cafes, restaurants and takeaway food services (8.5%), retail trade (7%) and education and training (21.7%). [Find more information here.](#)

### Household Spending Growth Slows

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data shows household spending growth has slowed. ABS head of business indicators Kate Lamb said: "From a peak of 29.1% in August 2022, this month's 6% growth has followed a downward pattern from an 11.9% rise in February and an 8.4% rise in March. This is mainly due to lower growth in spending on consumer services, like holiday travel and eating out, which continues to normalise." In NSW, spending in hotels, cafes and restaurants rose 13.7%. [Find more information here.](#)

### April 2023 Overseas Arrivals

New Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows Australia welcomed 544,920 short-term visitors in 2023. The number of trips for April 2023 was 22.2 per cent lower than the pre-COVID-19 level in April 2019. There were 200,230 short-term visitor arrivals to NSW. The three leading source countries for NSW were: New Zealand (33,380 trips), the United States (21,920) and the United Kingdom (16,290). [Find more information here.](#)

### Increase to Minimum Wage and Award Wages

The Fair Work Commission (FWC) has published its [Annual Wage Review 2022-23](#) announcing a 5.75% increase in all modern awards, effective from the first full pay period on or after 1 July 2023. The National Minimum Wage has also been increased from \$21.38 per hour to \$23.23, an effective increase of 8.65%.

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## Around The Region

### 10 Most Beautiful Small Towns In New South Wales

Often overshadowed by the capital city, Sydney, from the global spectrum, these scenic small towns in New South Wales boast a unique charm. Travel.com have just released their 10 Most Beautiful Towns in NSW, with North Coast towns taking up five of the ten spots on the list. [See the full list here.](#)

### Using ChatGPT In Your Business

Learn a number of powerful steps in leveraging ChatGPT to transform your business operations. Join in this interactive hands-on workshop where you will learn a number of powerful steps in leveraging ChatGPT to transform your business operations. Tuesday, 18 July 2023 at C.ex Coffs International Stadium. [Bookings essential.](#)

### Bellingen Memorial Hall - Grand Reopening

In May 2023, the local community was invited to a six-night series of events designed to mark completion of the long-awaited refurbishment of Bellingen Memorial Hall. [See images here.](#)





## Industry Development And Other Opportunities

### REMINDER: NSW Tourism Awards Nominations Closing Soon

Nominations for the 2023 NSW Tourism Awards have been extended to **Friday 30 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.](#)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



### **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](#).

### **First Nations Cultural Consultant Panel**

Screen NSW are seeking First Nations screen practitioners, and community members with an interest in film and television, to assess First Nations content in applications made to Screen NSW funding rounds. The role of the Consultant is to ensure that representations of First Nations stories are accurate and showcase the diversity of lives and stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to audiences in NSW and beyond. Expressions of Interest are now open. [Find more information here](#).

### **Have Your Say On AI In Australia**

From ChatGPT to DALL-E, artificial intelligence can help to grow our economy and optimise many parts of our lives. The Australian Government wants to hear your views on how we can support the safe and responsible use of AI. [Have your say now](#).

### **Digital Skills Assessment And Action Plan**

The [Digital Solutions - Australian Small Business Advisory Services](#) program works with small business owners to help them understand the benefits of digitising businesses and making the most of digital tools.

Specialist Digital Advisors will be available in various ways, including face-to-face and online meetings, interactive workshops and webinars, with advice specific to your business needs. If you register for a Digital Skills Assessment and Action Plan before the 30th of June you will gain access to the program at no cost. As a part of this program, you will receive:

- A 3-year subscription to digital skills support content
- 4 hours of one-to-one time spent with a digital skills assessor and business advisor
- Access to workshops and online seminars

[Register here](#).

### **Tourism Australia June 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](#).

### **TikTok Tips For Tourism**

[Join Tourism Tribe](#) on 26 July for this one hour FREE webinar for tourism businesses. Learn how to assess whether you should bother with TikTok, how to spend the minimum of time for the maximum impact, and the type of content that works best on this platform.

### **Mid North Coast Business Awards**

The Mid North Coast Business Awards celebrates the innovation, resilience and dedication of businesses across the region. Businesses play a vital role in driving economic growth, creating jobs, and contributing to the overall well-being of the regions. By participating in the Regional Business Awards, you not only have the opportunity to gain recognition and exposure for your business, but you also become part of a community of like-minded individuals who share your passion for success. Entries close 17 July 2023. [Find more information here](#).

### **Australian Festival Industry Conference Full 2023 Program Unveiled**

The Australian Festival Industry Conference (AFIC) has unveiled its full program for its third annual event to be held across Wednesday 30 - Thursday 31 August at Luna Park Sydney. [Find more information here](#).

### **Fee-Free Tafe NSW Courses**

- Hospitality
- Events
- Travel
- Tourism

This is a great chance to take advantage of Federal and NSW Government support to get staff upskilled with TAFE NSW Fee-Free courses, **starting 17 July 2023**.

Note, currently semester 2 2023 is the only free fee period on offer, and no guarantee the fee-free period will be extended (subject to Federal and NSW Government). [Find more information here](#).

### **Agritourism Factsheet Outline New Reforms**

The NSW government is making it easier for farmers to use their land for tourism activities such as farm experiences, cellar doors and farm stay accommodation. The [factsheet outlines five opportunities](#) for new business ventures in the agritourism space on NSW farms. [Find additional information and resources online](#).

### **Australian Of The Year Nominations**

The Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Australia Day Council of NSW are calling for nominations for the Australian of the Year Awards 2024. NSW is home to many people doing extraordinary things for their communities. It only takes one nomination to elevate their voice, help them access more support or give them the recognition they deserve. [Nominations close on 31 July 2023.](#)

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### **Funding And Other Opportunities**

#### **[Country Arts Support Program](#)**

Country Arts Support Program (CASP) is an annual small grants program that aims to support community arts and cultural development in regional NSW through small grants that:

- Assist locally determined community arts and cultural activities and opportunities for regionally based groups to access a diverse range of arts programs
- Enable communities to explore and express their cultural identities
- Bring social and economic benefits to the community through training employment and promotional opportunities
- Lead to greater awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity
- Increase the sustainability and resilience of regionally based community arts organisations.

Grants of \$500 - \$2,500 are available primarily for professional artists' fees, art materials, venue hire, travel and accommodation. Projects are to take place between 1 August 2023 to 31 January 2024. **Closes 30 June 2023.**

#### **[Tourism Australia's Advance Program](#)**

The Advance Program provides funding and the opportunity for Australian industry stakeholders to leverage Tourism Australia's international marketing and distribution expertise to increase the number and value of business events for Australia and to deliver best-practice marketing to grow international delegate attendance at confirmed international business events taking place in Australia. **Closes 31 July 2023.**

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### **North Coast Product Development**

#### **[South Solitary Island Exclusive Helicopter Tour](#)**

Fly by helicopter and land on South Solitary Island which is located 18 kilometres from Coffs Harbour. Rarely does an opportunity like this present itself as it is normally closed to the public.

Inspect the lighthouse keepers quarters which were built in 1880 and imagine living in this isolated outpost

The public are only allowed access for a few weekends per year.

#### **[The Picnic Train](#)**

For the first time in eight years a steam train will visit the Coffs Coast to run shuttles and day trips. Perfect for the whole family, choose from one of the short shuttles or one of two special trips from Coffs Harbour to either Nambucca Heads or Grafton.

Visitors can settle back and take in the glorious views in an historic 1930s carriage as a 1950s steam locomotive embarks on an exciting day out through spectacular countryside.

#### **[Isola Wine Shop & Tasting Room](#)**

Located under the Ramada Ballina, Isola Wine Shop and Tasting Room offers an interactive and knowledgeable 'cellar door' experience where lovingly selected wines are perfectly paired with delicious antipasti.

#### **[Better By Bike](#)**

Better By Bike operates e-bike rentals across the entire Northern Rivers Rail Trail Network. Whilst this is a Byron-based business, transfers to and from the Rail Trail are available including transfers from as far as Ballina with a minimum of four people.

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## 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 DNSW's website](#).

### [Social Fabric - Tweed Regional Museum](#)

Social Fabric displays some of the Museum's never before seen clothing collection. Each garment tells a surprising and unexpected story of drag queen gowns, mermaid costumes, military uniforms and lacy corsets which present a chronicle of the social history of fashion and dressmaking in the Tweed. Exhibition on display **until 15 July 2023**.

### [Skullcandy Oz Grom Open](#)

The Skullcandy Oz Grom Open returns to Lennox Head for its 11<sup>th</sup> year on the junior calendar! The **6-11 July 2023** competition is renowned for the strongest line ups across the age groups of 12s to Pro Junior Age.

### [Glenreagh Timber Festival](#)

Step back in time and discover the rich history of Glenreagh, nestled in stunning Gumbaynggirr country. This idyllic village has been intertwined with timber since the first settlers arrived in the Orara Valley over 160 years ago. From farmers to miners, the area has seen it all, but it was the need for timber that really kickstarted Glenreagh's long and fascinating relationship with this natural resource. **29 July 2023**.

