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## North Coast News & Views No. 170

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### **New Chair And Directors Appointed To Destination North Coast Board**

Destination North Coast welcome the appointment of new Board Directors John O'Neill, Dr Meredith Wray and Harry Barry with John being appointed the position of Chair.

John brings a wealth of knowledge and experience as an entrepreneur, businessman and corporate adviser and was previously Managing Director of Tourism NSW, the state organisation that was the pre-cursor to Destination NSW and he has also been a director on the Boards of the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse and Business Events Sydney. John is Partner and Founder of Komosion management consulting firm.

Many of you will be familiar with Meredith Wray, a leading regional tourism expert who works with governments, industries and communities across Australia to influence the sustainable development, management and marketing of tourism. Meredith has deep knowledge of the North Coast visitor economy.

Rounding out the newly appointed Director is Harry Barry, a well-known Coffs Coast identity who is the director of the North Coast Hotel Group, which owns seven pubs, employing upwards of 250 hospitality staff. As a major regional employer, Harry's industry perspective will be most welcome.

John, Meredith and Harry join current directors, Margaret Shannon, General Manager Tiona Holiday Park and Julie Stewart, Airport Manager, Ballina Byron Gateway Airport.

We welcome our new Board Directors and their diverse expertise and fresh perspective.

Sincere thanks and gratitude go to outgoing Chair, Cameron Arnold and outgoing Directors Rod Barnaby and Michael Grieve, all of whom have been with the organisation since its inception in 2017 and who have made invaluable contributions to DNC and the North Coast region. We truly appreciate their expertise and contribution of knowledge and time to guiding DNC through the last six years and wish them the very best in their future endeavours.

Destination North Coast look forward to introducing the new look DNC Board to industry stakeholders at the North Coast Tourism Symposium and North Coast Tourism Awards, 27 July 2023 in the Tweed.

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## North Coast Tourism Symposium

Destination North Coast with destination co-hosts [Tweed Tourism Co.](#) and [Tweed Shire Council](#), look forward to welcoming stakeholders from across and beyond the region, to the [2023 North Coast Tourism Symposium](#) in three short weeks' time. Preparations are in full swing to bring our industry conference to life on Thursday 27th July, at [Peppers Resort and Spa, Kingscliff](#).

The Symposium will be a day of information sharing, learning and connection and a great opportunity to absorb new information, insights, and ideas. Join us and hear from business and tourism experts who'll challenge your perspective and perceptions! [Eliane Miles](#), social researcher, strategist and trend analyst; Jan Hutton from the [Australian Tourism Data Warehouse](#) and Kylie Robertson, [Caravanning and Camping Industry Association NSW](#) lead the charge and local favourite Tim Jack Adams, [GreenX7](#) will bring energy and passion to the afternoon session.

**[Ticket sales](#) will close at 5pm, 13 July 2023 unless capacity is reached beforehand.**

Destination North Coast are keen to implement sustainable practices into our events as we commence our sustainability journey. Working in partnership with [Earthcheck](#) and their [EventCheck](#) framework, we ask you to support our commitment to continued improvement of our environmental performance in delivering our annual events.

In doing so, we ask all who plan to attend the North Coast Tourism Symposium and/or North Coast Tourism Awards, to car share/car pool where possible and practical and to fill in this [quick survey](#) so we can measure the carbon footprint of attendance at our events. It will take a minute or two to provide your travel plans so thank you in advance for sharing our commitment to the environment.



# EARTHCHECK

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## North Coast Tourism Awards

Tickets for the North Coast Tourism Awards are now **SOLD OUT!** The Awards, a pilot program brought to you by Destination North Coast with delivery partner Business NSW, will see businesses awarded for excellence across 17 categories.

Get ready for an evening of celebration, recognition and entertainment.

[See the full list of awards finalists here.](#)

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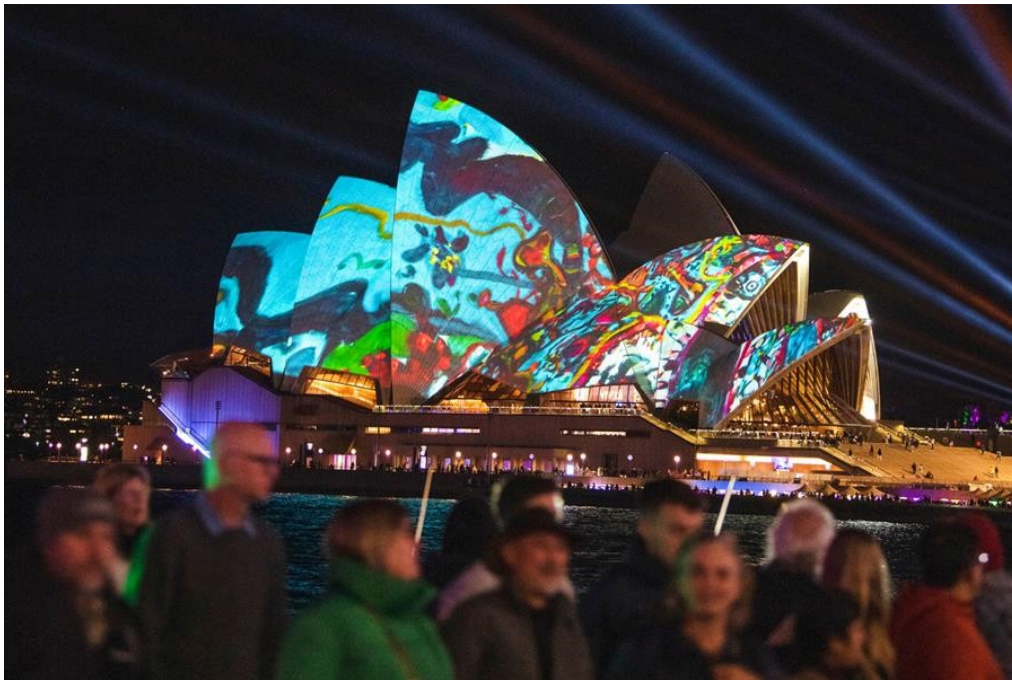
## Some Amazing Stats From Vivid Sydney 2023

Vivid Sydney has always been a festival about bringing people together and this year was no exception.

Preliminary figures from Vivid Sydney 2023 show record participants enjoyed Light, Music, Ideas and Food programs over 23 nights. Here are five top statistics from the festival.

- Vivid Sydney 2023 hit its biggest attendance record in history, with more than 3.28 million people, up 30 per cent.
- Written in the Stars, the largest drone show in the Southern Hemisphere, drew more than 500,000 people.
- A sold-out In Conversation event with *The White Lotus* creator Mike White and star Jennifer Coolidge at the ICC Sydney attended by 7366 people, a Vivid Ideas record.
- More than 1200 attendees for Vivid Music's A Bend in the River, A Tribute to Archie Roach AC at Sydney Town Hall.
- Hotels in the CBD also reported increased visitation during the festival, with occupancy rates up 12 per cent overall compared to 2022, lifting occupancy to 78 per cent across the CBD and 90 per cent on Friday and Saturday nights.

Watch a drone fly-through of Vivid Sydney 2023 [here](#).





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## NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC Week celebrations are currently being held across NSW and offer an opportunity for all Australians to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories and participate in celebrations of the oldest, continuous living cultures on earth.

Aboriginal tourism is a strategic priority for both Destination NSW and Tourism Australia, with the aim of facilitating a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and driving the uptake of these experiences.

A new Destination NSW 'Domestic Culture and Heritage Based Tourism in NSW' report shows culture and heritage tourism drew 9.1 million domestic visitors to NSW in the year ending December 2022, who spent \$7.3 billion.

[Learn more here.](#)

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## Turning Up The Volume On Live Music

Round Six of the Federal Government's Live Music Australia program is delivering grants to 62 recipients with a focus on supporting and improving live music venues. The funding will assist recipients with renovations, sound and lighting upgrades, and payments to artists - enabling venues to support more original music, hold more gigs and reach larger audiences.

Among the successful NSW applicants were Coffs Harbour's Hoey Moey and the Upper Lansdowne Memorial Hall. [See the full list of recipients here.](#)

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## 2023 NSW Sommelier's Wine List Awards Winners Announced

The top category winners in the 2023 NSW Sommelier's Wine List Awards, run by the NSW Wine Industry Association (NSW Wine), were announced last week at NSW Parliament House. Over the last five years, these awards have shone a light on great NSW-based sommeliers and venues and outstanding wine lists that support local and highlight the quality and diversity of the great wines of NSW.

2023 saw no less than forty-two NSW Sommelier's Wine List Awards Finalists (a record number) up for the top trophies and titles in each of the eight categories. Of special note, we congratulate Pete Cutcliffe + Jen Paquet from [Bill Fishhouse + Bar](#), Port Macquarie, winner 2023 Best NSW Wine List in a Regional NSW venue (<60 seats).

[Read Media Release.](#)

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## Industry Insights

### National Visitor Survey Data Released.

Tourism Research Australia's [National Visitor Survey](#) data for the year ending March 2023 shows NSW received its highest volume of domestic overnight holiday visitors (15.5 million), nights (51.5 million) and expenditure (\$14.9 billion) on record.

NSW welcomed a total of 36 million domestic overnight visitors, who stayed 114.5 million nights and spent almost \$30 billion. Their average stay was 3.2 nights, with an average spend per night of \$261.

NSW recorded the highest absolute growth nationally in domestic overnight visitors, nights and expenditure in the year ending March 2023.

### Intention To Travel Still High

Flight Centre Travel Group Leisure has revealed the results of its [2023 Travel Intentions customer survey](#), which showed 72 per cent of those polled plan to take more than one domestic trip in the next 12 months. There was also a preference for longer domestic stays (more than one week) among 35 per cent of respondents. The findings were presented at an investor strategy session in Sydney.

### Caravan And Camping Campaign Success

The results are in for phase two of the *Feel More. Live More* marketing campaign, a Caravan and Camping Industry Association NSW (CCIA NSW) initiative in partnership with Destination NSW. Running from 12 March to 6 May 2023, [TV ads from the campaign](#) reached 15.05 million people, while social media content reached 1.87 million people, digital ads created 2.87 million impressions and traffic to the CCIA NSW website was 466% up on normal levels. [Find more information here.](#)

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## Around The Region

### Show Me The Monet: Sharing The National Collection

A \$174 million masterpiece by French impressionist Claude Monet will be among the first artworks shared with a regional gallery under the Sharing the National Collection initiative. The painting - *Meules, milieu du jour* [Haystacks, midday], 1890 - will be one of five works from the National Gallery of Australia's collection to be shared with the [Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre](#). Three works by iconic Australian artist Margaret Olley will also be travelling to Tweed, as well as *Natura morta* [Still life], 1956, by Giorgio Morandi - one of Olley's favourite artists. [Read media release.](#)

### Big Banana's New Attractions

The team at the Award-Winning [Big Banana Fun Park](#) have been busy behind the scenes, preparing for a new and exciting world class attraction on the Coffs Coast. These exciting additions will dramatically expand their offering to the local market and assist in growing tourism visitation to the region.

Four purpose-built world class Escape Rooms are underway and will be located in the southern end of the existing Laser Tag building. Escape Rooms are a worldwide craze which provide an immersive experience where players work together to solve a series of interactive puzzles, clues and scenarios to achieve the final goal.

In addition to these Escape Rooms, The Big Banana Fun Park are also expanding on their current Go Bananas Fun Zone, to make it a destination in its own right. [Read media release.](#)





#### **North Coast National Parks Update**

The National Parks and Wildlife Service has been busy undertaking flood damage repairs and also upgrading and refreshing facilities thanks to significant infrastructure investment. There are many changes in northern NSW national parks, including Wollumbin National Park, Mount Jerusalem National Park; Nightcap National Park and Richmond River National Park. All Mid North Coast Parks are open for the holidays but visitors should be sure to check the NPWS website for up-to-date information regarding closures. [Read the media release](#) and [visit the website](#) for more information.

#### **Silver Schoolies 2023: Let's Paint The Barrington Coast Silver!**

We've all heard of the famous "Schoolies" event that takes place at the end of each year, where school leavers descend upon coastal destinations, intent on kicking up their heels and celebrating the achievements of the past few years with friends made along the way.

Now, the picturesque coastal town of Forster is buzzing with excitement as 'Schoolies' of a different demographic gear up for what promises to be one of the most unique events to hit the East Coast - **Silver Schoolies**. This inaugural regional event, running from Monday 31 July to Friday 4 August, is aimed at creating a sense of community and adventure for over 55 caravan and campers, and promises an unforgettable week of activities and friendship.

Given the North Coast NSW is the most popular caravan and camping region in NSW, the significance of Silver Schoolies cannot be overstated, as an excellent opportunity to showcase the beauty and hospitality of the Barrington Coast region. [Find more information here.](#)

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## Industry Development And Other Opportunities

### Destination NSW Strive 4 Sustainability Scorecard

Destination NSW has partnered with Ecotourism Australia to provide free access to the pre-certification Strive 4 Sustainability Scorecard for eligible NSW visitor economy businesses. The free Strive 4 Sustainability Scorecard supports visitor economy businesses including attractions, tours and accommodation providers to assess their current performance across the four pillars of sustainability:

- Environmental impacts
- Socio-economic impacts
- Cultural impacts
- Sustainable management.

Measuring business performance can assist with making informed decisions and taking steps to enhance and promote sustainable practices.

The scorecard can be completed at your own pace with the average completion time is 4 to 8 hours.

[Expressions of interest are open](#) with places limited.

### EarthCheck Inner Circle Forum 2023

EarthCheck will hold its 'Inner Circle Forum' on **28 August** in Brisbane/Meeanjin. The forum provides the opportunity for the tourism industry thought leaders, innovators and change-makers to gather together to investigate the challenges and opportunities facing the industry. This year, three core themes ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance), Leading Destinations of the World™ and Net Zero Pathways will be discussed. [More information and full program is available here.](#)

### Great North Coast Trail Feasibility Study

Destination North Coast through the Department of Regional NSW's [Business Case and Strategy Development Fund](#) are assessing the Viability of Development of a Great North Coast Trail, stretching from the Newcastle to the Tweed.

If feasible, the Great North Coast Trail would connect the existing network of high-quality walking and nature-based experiences with lesser-known, under-developed stretches of the coastline to become a true long-distance walking track and stand-out nature-based experience along the length of our region's coastal boundary.

Working with [TRC Tourism](#), specialists in in tourism, trails feasibility assessments and business cases, this project assesses what the experience may look like, who are the target markets and whether the business case shows it is feasible and economically sound.

North Coast stakeholders interested in this study should [complete this online survey](#) so we capture your views and opinion (**closes 12 July 2023**).

### Towards Net Zero

'Towards net zero' refers to the collective efforts being made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a level where they are offset by the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Achieving a net zero carbon footprint is crucial for mitigating the worst effects of climate change and ensuring a sustainable future for our planet. Destination NSW has a [selection of resources](#) specifically aimed at helping NSW businesses become more sustainable.

### NSW First - ATEC Host Market Specialist Training

Destination NSW has partnered with the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) to provide free access for internationally-ready NSW tour, attraction and accommodation businesses to access three ATEC Host online learning modules including; China Host, India Host and Accessible & Inclusive Host.

By completing these training programs, operators will learn how to:

- Effectively attract and service visitors from key markets by being culture-ready, product & service ready, and marketing & trade ready
- Work effectively with key travel distributors

[Sign up now to express your interest](#) in the ATEC Host online learning modules with places limited.





### **Acknowledgement Of Country Microskills**

TAFE NSW has created a new microskill module - Acknowledgment of Country. The two-hour course will increase understanding of the concept of Country as an interconnected and interwoven set of relationships with place, people and culture. For the Traditional Custodians of the Countries on which you live and work, it is important that this special connection and understanding of Aboriginal Peoples is recognised and incorporated into official protocols to enable the wider community to share in their cultures and facilitate better relationships between First Australians and the general community. [Find more information here.](#)

### **Term 3, 2023 Industry Pathways Program Event**

The North Coast "[Be Our Guest and Beyond Hospitality & Service Industry Showcase](#)" is proudly a NSW Department of Education - Educational Pathways Program (EPP) initiative in partnership with some Regional Industry experts.

**Event Purpose:** Promote multiple pathways possible across Hospitality, Tourism, Retail and Service Industries

**For:** Year 10-12 students, TAS, HSIE & VET HT's, teachers, support staff (aimed at students in Year 10-12 undertaking Food Technology; Hospitality; Retail, Business, Commerce, and/or any student exploring potential career opportunities)

**When:** 9am - 3pm, Tuesday 12 September

**Where:** Ballina Jockey Club.

Please register your [commitment to attend the event.](#)

### **Quick Guide to Accessibility for Tourism Operators**

Accessible travel app Vacayit has recently released a [Quick Guide to Accessibility for Tourism Operators.](#)

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## **Funding And Other Opportunities**

### **[Growing Regions Program Round 1](#)**

The Growing Regions Program - Round 1 will deliver grants up to a maximum of \$15,000,000 over 3 years to deliver community infrastructure projects. It will deliver community and economic benefits by investing in community-focused infrastructure which revitalises regions and enhances amenity and liveability throughout regional Australia. Growing Regions Program Round 1 will be delivered through a two-stage selection process.

You must first submit an Expression of Interest at Stage 1 and if successful, you will be invited to submit a full application at Stage 2.  
**Closes 1 August 2023.**

### **[Get Set For NSW Small Business Month](#)**

NSW Small Business Month will be held in October 2023 and will feature hundreds of events to support small businesses. Local business chambers, industry associations, not for profits and local councils have been invited to apply for a grant to host an event or apply to be a Small Business Month collaboration partner. **Closes 1 August 2023.**

### **[Regional Filming Fund](#)**

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.**

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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](#).

### [Casino Truck Show](#)

Celebrating its 10th year, organisers are busily setting the scene for what is shaping up to be the best-ever North Coast Petroleum Casino Truck Show. **5 August 2023.**

### [Casino Craft Beer Festival](#)

Beers, brews, food and music! **12 August 2023.**

### [North Coast Mud Trail](#)

Ceramicists will open their studios to visitors so they can meet the artists, discuss their work and processes and find out what inspires them to do what they do. **19-20 August 2023.**

### [Sculpture In The Gaol Returns](#)

Sculpture in the Gaol, 'where great ideas escape', is a beloved event on the Macleay Valley Coast's (MVC) cultural calendar. With a rich 12-year history, this art exhibition is hosted annually at the historic Trial Bay Gaol in South West Rocks. The event transforms the heritage-listed gaol into a breathtaking artistic landscape, featuring a stunning array of sculptures displayed throughout the precinct. Opens **25 August 2023.**

### [Coffs Cycle Classic](#)

With distances that cater for the novice and families through to the experienced weekend warrior, this event will see hundreds of riders converge into Coffs Harbour to ride in one of the most picturesque regions in Australia. **26 August 2023.**

### [Quota Alstonville Craft & Garden Fair](#)

A two-day event showcasing the best Craft artisans of the Far North Coast and SE Queensland. Combined with a garden fair of quality plants and garden products from local growers, this fair has over 80 stalls brimming with colour. **26-27 August 2023.**

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