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## North Coast News & Views No. 173

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### Chinese Tour Groups Set To Return To NSW

Australia has returned to China's list of approved outgoing group travel destinations for the first time since borders reopened.

The reinstatement of Australia's Approved Destination Status (ADS) follows the recent launch in China of Tourism Australia's successful \$125 million Come and Say G'Day campaign. The campaign kicked off on 29 June and is already proving to be a success, with the television commercial receiving more than 66 million views across all channels.

Prior to the pandemic, China was the largest and most valuable inbound traveller market for the Australian visitor economy. In 2019, more than 1.4 million holiday makers from China spent \$2.1 billion in Australia, including about \$581 million spent by ADS group travel participants.

[Read media release.](#) Internationally-ready businesses can sign up for free access to [ATEC's China Host](#) as part of Destination NSW's NSW First collaboration with ATEC.

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### ATDW Transformation Update

If you attended the recent North Coast Tourism Symposium, you will have received advance notice that the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW), is embarking on a digital transformation journey.

The evolution will include a new brand identity and cloud-based platform with enhanced functionality, to ensure seamless representation of Australia's regions, visitor experiences and events to better capture and convert global consumer interest. [Learn more here.](#)

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### Help Shape The Future Of Arts And Culture In NSW

Visitor economy businesses are invited to contribute their insights and ideas to inform the NSW Government's new Arts and Cultural Policy.

The contribution of visitor economy stakeholders will help the NSW Government develop innovative solutions and address challenges to foster growth in the arts and cultural sector and to enrich the visitor experience for domestic and international travellers.

Your contribution to the new Arts and Culture Policy will help the NSW Government and Destination NSW to identify opportunities within this diverse sector and strengthen its links with the state's visitor economy. [Submissions close on 31 August 2023.](#)

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### Ecotourism Australia & Caravan Industry Assoc. Announce Pathway To Sustainability

[Ecotourism Australia](#) and the [Caravan Industry Association of Australia](#) have agreed to collaborate to create a pathway to sustainability for caravanning and camping tourism enterprises in Australia through Ecotourism Australia's Strive 4 Sustainability Scorecard. Launched in late 2022, the Sustainable Tourism pathway program supports the tourism industry and the tourism supply to address the four pillars of sustainability: sustainable management, environmental impacts, socio-economic impacts, and cultural impacts. It includes the Strive 4 Sustainability Scorecard pre-certification benchmarking tool; and the flagship ECO Certification program (for nature-based tourism businesses) and the new Sustainable Tourism Certification for non-nature-based businesses, both of which have a standard recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC).

[Read media release.](#)

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### Agritourism Planning Changes

The NSW Government have introduced clear planning terms for agritourism. This will make it easier for farmers to know how they can use their land for new income streams.

The new and amended terms include:

- farm gate premises - where visitors interact with produce from the farm, such as through fruit picking, sales, tastings, workshops and cafés
- farm experience premises - where visitors can experience life on a farm, including tours, horse riding, weddings, functions and retreats
- farm stay accommodation - including camping, caravanning and glamping.

[Find more information here.](#)

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### Pick-Your-Own Farm Exemptions

The NSW Government will amend the agritourism policy to ensure pick-your-own-fruit farms are allowed to operate with more than 100 visitors at a time without the need for planning approval. Planning and Public Spaces Minister Paul Scully said: "The visitor caps were an unfair restriction on pick-your-own activities, which were operating before the policy began - some cater for up to 1500 visitors a day, especially on weekends and at harvest time. By removing the visitor cap for all businesses, it will give more farmers greater opportunities to sell fresh produce direct to the public."

[Read media release.](#)

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### Holiday Break Grants Deliver Free Creative Workshops For Young People In Regional NSW

Young people in regional NSW will enjoy free cultural, creative and performing arts workshops during the

upcoming Spring and Summer holidays, through the NSW Government's Holiday Break Program. A wide range of workshops - including dance and physical theatre, drama, storytelling, music, and Aboriginal arts and cultural programs - will take place in 25 towns across regional NSW during the upcoming 2023 NSW Spring holiday (25 September - 6 October 2023) and Summer holiday (20 December 2023 - 29 January 2024) breaks.

[Read media release.](#)

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## New Chief Executive For Local Government NSW

The Board of Local Government New South Wales has appointed David Reynolds as its new Chief Executive. [Find more information.](#)

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## Industry Insights

### National Visitor Survey - May 2023

The NVS snapshot for the month of [May 2023](#) is now published. It shows domestic spend was \$8 billion (up 38 per cent on May 2019) and there were 8.6 million overnight trips (down 8 per cent on May 2019). Early data shows domestic overnight trip rates for June were slightly higher compared to June 2022, but were weaker than the same period in 2019.

### International Visitor Survey Results

The IVS snapshot for the month of [May 2023](#) is also available. The data shows spending in May 2023 was \$1.7 billion (95 per cent of pre-COVID-19 levels) and there were 481,000 trips (74 per cent of pre-COVID-19 levels). The top five visitor markets were New Zealand, United States, India, Singapore and China.

### Caravanning July Sentiment Report

The Caravan Industry Association of Australia (CIAA) has shared its [Caravan Industry Consumer Sentiment Report](#) for July 2023, which shows many Australians are opting for cost-effective, value-for-money holiday alternatives instead of abandoning their travel plans entirely. Additionally, 29 per cent even intend to increase their holidays this year, underscoring a desire to "spoil themselves" amid the economic strain, while 90 per cent of respondents view caravan and camping as offering superior value for money compared to other holiday types.

### Shopping Tourism Insights

New insights from YouGov have revealed how "shopping tourism" can be a boon for visitor economies. According to YouGov data, roughly one in five (18 per cent) of global leisure travellers say they travel mainly for shopping. Singaporeans are the biggest shopping travellers, with 36 per cent of consumers typically travelling for shopping. [Find more information here.](#)

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## Around The Region

### Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk - Upcoming Commercial Opportunities

The Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk (formerly known as the Tweed Byron Hinterland Trails) is a 36-kilometre multi-day walk and the centrepiece of the Tweed Byron Hinterland Trails project. Starting near the town of Uki in the Mount Jerusalem National Park, the walk will conclude at Minyon Falls lookout in the Nightcap National Park.

The 4-day walk will wind through some of the region's most spectacular rainforest and feature three new campgrounds with visitor amenities where walkers can camp overnight. A new trailhead near Unicorn Falls in Mount Jerusalem National Park will complement the Walk.

To support the Walk, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) will be seeking innovative and unique tourism offerings to complement and enhance the Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk experience.

The [Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk Tourism Partnership Opportunities](#) showcases the commercial opportunities that will be available under selective licensing.

NPWS will be offering selective licences for commercial opportunities on the Walk via a competitive market process known as an Expression of Interest (EOI). This will include an opportunity to deliver walking experiences along the Walk from 31 March 2024.

**All EOI opportunities will be available on the [NSW Supplier hub](#) when released this month.**

To keep informed about the Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk project, visit the NPWS website and [register for updates](#).

### Lawrence Water Tower Art

This artwork on the [Lawrence Water Tower](#) encapsulates the beauty and interconnectedness of nature, inviting viewers to contemplate the celestial and earthly elements that shape our existence. It serves as a testament to the enduring power and majesty of the natural world, reminding us of the importance of preserving and cherishing our environment.



### School-Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship Information Evening - Byron

Byron Shire businesses are invited to a School-Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship Information Evening. This event is delivered in partnership with Regional Industry Education Partnerships, Training Services NSW. Find out more about employing or becoming a School-Based Apprentice or Trainee. **28 August 2023.** [Find more information here.](#)

### Women's Golf To Boost Regional Economies

[Bonville International Golf Course](#) will be on show with the course confirmed for next year's Australian Women's Classic. With a record purse of \$500,000, the nation's brightest up-and-coming female golfers will go stroke for stroke vying for qualification, driving the fairways of stunning courses as well as the visitor economy of regional NSW. [Find more information.](#)

### Macleay Valley Recreation Adventure Park Update

The Macleay Valley Recreation Adventure Park at the Kempsey Airport has taken a big step forward with approval of the Development Application.

The grant-funded adventure park will provide residents and tourists with an entertaining attraction and will include a rock climbing and sky diving centre, BMX pump track, canopy swoop pond, accommodation and more. This will be a vital economic boost for the Mid North Coast region.

### Heritage Park Path Improves Lismore Visitor Experience

The newly constructed pathway in Lismore's popular [Heritage Park](#) provides an accessible pedestrian link from Molesworth Street through to the river. The new 2.5m-wide path also includes lighting for

improved night-time safety and access to toilets and play equipment, ensuring the park is an even more attractive destination for locals and visitors. One of the best features of the new path is the well-designed raised deck around the glorious 90-year-old fig tree that offers visitors a variety of shaded-seating options.

#### **Horseshoe Bay Walking Path Improvements**

Kempsey Shire Council has recently completed the construction of a new walking path on the scenic [foreshore of Horseshoe Bay](#). This path replaces a previously informal trail that traversed steep ground, offering a safer and more enjoyable experience for visitors.

#### **Ulmarra Riverside Village Precinct Plan**

After the devastating floods that occurred in 2022, work in Ulmarra CBD upgrade and Bailey Park has now been completed, including wider footpaths, new toilet blocks, and an upgraded playground. The [Ulmarra Riverside Village Precinct Plan](#) is designed to establish Ulmarra as a 'must see' destination for visitors, revitalise the river edge and improve access, and promote Ulmarra as a place of character and heritage significance.

#### **Port Macquarie Major Event And Community Grants**

[Major Event Grants](#) are for events held between 1 January and 30 June 2024 and are available for up to \$5,000 per application. This grant is designed to provide event organisers with a financial boost for marketing activities when establishing their event.

[Community Grants](#) include creative projects or events, such as a local art, music, performance or cultural event, place-making project that enhances a community space, well-being or community participation. \$5,000 is available for local events and celebrations. \$10,000 for community development projects.

**Round 1 applications** close on 3 September 2023.

#### **Moby Dick Waterfront Resort Motel Yamba**

Congratulations to the [Moby Dick Waterfront Resort Motel](#) for being recognized in the prestigious KAYAK Travel Awards 2023. This accolade is a testament to their commitment to providing outstanding hospitality experiences, as acknowledged by their valued guests.

#### **Ecotourism Australia Recognises 10-year Eco Certified Tourism Operators**

[Ecotourism Australia](#) recognises Green Travel Leaders, who are tourism businesses that have reached a decade of ECO Certification, and who are to be commended for their continuous commitment to global sustainability standards.

Congratulations to [Diamond Waters Treehouse Retreat](#) for their commitment to this journey.

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## **Industry Development And Other Opportunities**

#### **Social Media Ads Workshop**

Are you eager to take your business or project to new heights through the power of social media advertising? Unlock the secrets to creating compelling and effective social media ads that drive engagement, conversions, and growth at the Innovation Hub Coffs Coast's FREE upcoming workshop. **Thursday 24 August. 9.00am - 11.00am.** [Register here.](#)

#### **Tasting Australia Spirit Awards**

The Australian distilling industry is one of the fastest growing and most diverse in the world. These national awards aim to recognise that ingenuity and fortitude while celebrating the industry's achievements. There are 10 award categories, including Best Whisky, Best Gin, Best Vodka, and Best Liqueur. So whether you're a seasoned distiller or just starting out, they want to see your best spirits! [Entries close 25 August, 2023.](#)

#### **Your Property On A Film Set**

Searching for a unique location to shoot in NSW? Own a property reminiscent of a grand film set? Whether it's a rural homestead with sweeping views, a suburban manor of architectural merit, or coastal getaway with tropical gardens, search for or add your property to Reel Scout, the [NSW locations database](#).

#### **Register for ATIG's Monthly Webinars**

Every month, the Australian Tourism Industry Group (ATIG) provides a free digital marketing for tourism webinar focussing on areas such as website design, search engine optimisation (SEO), social media marketing, and more. [Follow ATIG on Eventbrite](#) to keep up to date on free training opportunities such as SEO, Canva Hacks, digital storytelling, travel blogging and more.

#### **35th Banksia Sustainability Awards Open**

The National Banksia Sustainability Awards shine a spotlight on the remarkable accomplishments of individuals, organisations, and communities across the nation. As the longest-running and most prestigious sustainability awards in Australia, the 35th Banksia's celebrate excellence in 14 categories, highlighting the diversity of sustainability practices right across the country. The Sustainable Tourism category of the awards recognises organisations, destinations and businesses that prioritise environmental conservation and demonstrate a commitment to minimising their ecological footprint, promoting responsible travel and visitor education, supporting local communities and preserving natural and cultural heritage. [Find more information here.](#)

#### **First Nations Tourism Mentoring Program Now Open**

The First Nations Tourism Mentoring Program (FNTMP) is a new, free mentoring program for First Nations tourism businesses across Australia, matching businesses with skilled and experienced mentors. This program is designed to support mentees to grow their tourism businesses and achieve their business goals. Mentees will have access to expert advice, tailored learning, and culturally respectful industry specialists.

Eligible First Nations tourism businesses will be matched with an experienced mentor who will work with you on a one-on-one basis to support your business achieve its goals and flourish.

This program is for businesses that are:

- 50 per cent or more First Nations owned
- Operating in the tourism sector or associated supply chain e.g. cafes and restaurants, accommodation providers, etc
- 'Semi mature' - that is, it is active and currently in operation and has products or services which are or can be made available to domestic and/or international visitors.

There is no cost to businesses for this service - the FNTMP is free for mentees to access. [Find more information here.](#)



#### **Digital Solutions Program - Business Australia**

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

Digital Solutions is a comprehensive program designed to empower small businesses with digital solutions, resources, and expert guidance to accelerate their growth, productivity and efficiency in the digital age. Once you sign up for the program, you will receive a three-year subscription to:

- Up to 4 hours of one-to-one time spent with a digital skills assessor and business advisor
- Access to workshops and online seminars, delivered by industry experts across the state
- A library of resources including videos, webinars, podcasts, reading material and images

All this for a one-time payment of \$45 + GST. [Register here.](#)

## Funding and Other Opportunities

### Cultural Fund

The Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund supports leading Australian organisations with grants to create and deliver exceptional opportunities for Australian writers, journalists, editors, publishers, picture book illustrators, cartoonists, graphic novelists, English and literacy teachers, and visual artists.

The Cultural Fund encourages potential applicants to create opportunities for writers, editors and visual artists at all career stages, and especially for those from First Nations and diverse backgrounds. **Closes 25 September 2023.**

### NSW EPA - Litter Prevention Grants

This program aims to facilitate action and inspire leadership in litter prevention to ensure a healthy and thriving environment for the future. There are varying levels of funding available for initiatives across three streams. Businesses are eligible to apply for cigarette butt litter and clean-up projects. **EOIs close 29 September 2023.**

### Wine Tourism & Cellar Door Grants

The Wine Tourism and Cellar Door Grant is designed to support wine or cider producers who add value by encouraging visitors to wine regions, and thereby encourage wine tourism. Grants up to \$100,000 (ex GST) for eligible entities. **Closes 30 September 2023.**

### Small Business Skills And Training Boost

This program aims to support small businesses to build a better trained and more productive workforce. Small businesses will be able to deduct an additional 20% of expenditure that is incurred for the provision of eligible external training courses to their employees by registered providers in Australia. **Closes 30 June 2024.**

### Small Business Energy Incentive

This program aims to support small and medium businesses to save on energy bills through incentivising the electrification of assets and improvements to energy efficiency. **Closes 30 June 2024.**

### 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). **Closes 30 June 2024.**

## North Coast Product & Experience Development

### New Ink Gin Release

Ink Gin has recently released their latest spirit, [Ink Bitter Orange Gin](#) adding to the line-up. Ink Bitter Orange Gin is highly versatile, with its approachable palette working beautifully in all classic cocktails. Thank you [Ink Gin](#) and [Husk Farm Distillery](#)!

### Major Upgrade in Progress at the Kalateenee MTB Trails

Kempsey will soon boast some of the best enduro mountain bike trails in the state after work commenced on an upgrade of [Kalateenee Mountain Bike Park](#).

### Stone & Wood - Murwillumbah

[Stone & Wood](#) recently announced expansion plans for their Murwillumbah brewery to enhance the visitor experience. The multi-million-dollar upgrade will include a Tasting Room, Beer Garden and plant tours scheduled for 2024 pending development approvals.

### Iiuka Sunset And Wine

Welcoming a new business to Iiuka where guests can watch the glorious Iiuka sunset with drink in hand. This little wine bar located on the river at [The Boatshed](#) is serving drinks and tapas.

### Gigi's Burgers & Diner - Forster

New eatery in Forster from the owners of Isola Riva, Lupo's and Il Salone. [Gigi's](#) is a vibrant, fun and delicious menu of burgers, drinks, sides, salads and meals for the whole family. Dine in or takeaway, there's something for everyone.



### Hotel Marvell - Byron Bay

Byron Bay is preparing to welcome its first five-star, luxury hotel, with [Hotel Marvell](#) set to open this month. Featuring a tropical and colourful aesthetic, the property offers 16 hotel rooms, six suites, and two two-bedroom hotel rooms featuring private balconies, promising guests an experience of "relaxed luxury". Guests can also enjoy a rooftop bar and pool and dine at the [Bonito restaurant](#), led by chef Minh Le. Sustainability is a priority for Hotel Marvell, which sources its food and produce as locally as possible.

### The Regent Cottage at The Gallery Farm - Collombatti

The [Gallery Farm](#) is a luxury farm stay located in the lush green foothills of Collombatti on the Mid North Coast. The beautifully designed two-bedroom guest cottage boasts spectacular district views, a large private balcony and outdoor entertaining area surrounded by lush gardens, grazing cattle and abundant wildlife and makes for a perfect escape.

## 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](#).

### North Coast Mud Trail

Clay is a wonderful material. It bends to our will and yet has a will of its own. Infinitely malleable, variable and adaptable, the nineteen potters on this year's trail will delight in showing you just how they manipulate their favourite material to create functional as well as sculptural pieces in clay. Whatever you're looking for in the wide world of ceramics, the 2023 North Coast Mud Trail will allow you to find it. **19-20 August 2023.**

### 2023 Wheels 'N' Wines Festival - Sherwood Estate

A day for all auto enthusiasts in the Macleay Valley, the 2023 Wheels 'N' Wines Festival will have

something for everyone, including: exhibition cars, automobile classics, vintage motorcycles, helicopter rides and more. **27 August 2023.**



**Aboriginal NRL Knockout - Lismore**

The Lismore Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout carnival is set to return this year at the newly redeveloped Crozier Field and Oakes Oval in Lismore. **15-17 September 2023.**

**Lismore Workers Masters Games**

The 12th biennial Lismore Workers Masters Games is one of the most entertaining multi-sporting events in regional Australia. With over 1000 competitors and 11 sports - baseball, cricket, fitness challenges, football, hockey, five-a-side, golf, lawn bowls, netball, oztag, softball and pickleball. This exciting event will draw competitors from around Australia to the region. **22-24 September 2023.**

**Woolgoolga Curryfest**

Curryfest celebrates the unique Punjabi Sikh heritage of Woolgoolga, and the 2023 event is anticipated to be one of the biggest in the event's 18-year history! The Beach Reserve and streets of this seaside village will be transformed into a sea of colour, music and aroma in a spectacular celebration of food, culture and dance. **23 September 2023.**

**Hello Koalas Festival and Treasure Hunt - Port Macquarie**

The 7th Hello Koalas Festival celebrates Australia's much loved iconic koala. The Festival is an annual cultural tourism event with a diverse program, including a four day Treasure Hunt. The Festival has been inspired by the Hello Koalas Sculpture Trail which encompasses 83 fibreglass one metre high koala sculptures, hand-painted by local artists, located in 68 locations on the Mid North Coast. **27-30 September 2023.**

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