



North Coast News & Views No. 178

Dolphin Marine Conservation Park Will Stay Open

Coffs Harbour's renowned [Dolphin Marine Conservation Park](#) will stay open, thanks to the charitable efforts of the Coffs Harbour community, and a committed local family who want to ensure a lasting legacy and a safe harbour for injured local wildlife. In a remarkable turnaround for the Coffs Coast icon, which went into voluntary administration in August under current management, the park will continue under new ownership.

Dolphin Marine Conservation Park has been bought and saved by the Life Science Manager, Tiga Cross, and her family. Tiga's relationship with the park began as 16 year old work experience student 14 years ago, and she is a passionate wildlife conservationist and advocate. The park will soon be rebranded as the Coffs Coast Wildlife Sanctuary. The sanctuary is committed to preserving marine ecosystems, providing innovative educational experiences, and fostering environmental stewardship. The sanctuary is dedicated to the welfare of animals, wildlife rescue, and contributing to the local economy while promoting the importance of marine life preservation.

[Read media release.](#)

Disaster Assistance For Kempsey, Mid-Coast And Port Macquarie Hastings Following Severe Bushfires

Disaster assistance is now available for Kempsey, Mid-Coast and Port Macquarie Hastings Local Government Areas (LGAs) following severe bushfires on 16 October 2023 onwards. A Recovery Centre is being opened by the NSW Reconstruction Authority at Willawarrin to support communities in and around the Kempsey region recover.

Assistance is being provided through the jointly funded Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

Assistance available under the DRFA may include:

- Help for eligible people whose homes or belongings have been damaged (eligibility criteria apply). Support for affected local councils to help with the costs of cleaning up and restoring damaged essential public assets.
- Concessional interest rate loans for small businesses, primary producers and non-profit organisations. Freight subsidies for primary producers.

Further information on disaster assistance can be found on the Australian Government's [Disaster Assist website](#).

[Read media release.](#)

More Aussie Travellers Flock To Regional Areas Post-Pandemic

Regional tourism continues to be the success story of Australia's domestic tourism market with average visitation surging to 9% above pre-pandemic levels, according to new data released by the Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF) Australia.

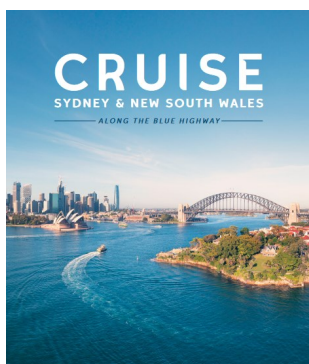
The latest DSpark report, commissioned by TTF, shows visits by Australian travellers surged for all top 10 regional tourism destinations during the most recent Summer/Autumn period (Dec 2022 - May 2023), compared to pre-Covid.

The report, which analysed anonymised and aggregated mobility data to examine the movement of Australian adults across regional tourism regions (outside of capital cities), also found that the most popular regional spot nationally was North Coast NSW, with visitation 4.2% higher than pre-Covid, and Byron Bay/Ballina the most visited area within that region. [Read media release.](#)

Destination NSW Supports Cruise Industry

There are nine beautiful ports along the NSW coastline - Sydney, Eden, Batemans Bay, Kiama, Wollongong, Newcastle, Trial Bay, Coffs Harbour and Yamba.

In line with the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030, Destination NSW works with the cruise sector to develop new opportunities for Sydney and regional NSW.



Opportunities for collaboration are leveraged via Destination NSW's 2023 Gold Executive Partnership with Cruise Lines International Association and a Platinum State Tourism Organisation membership of the Australian Cruise Association.

Destination NSW worked earlier this year with Port Authority NSW to produce a revised [Cruise Sydney & NSW - Along the Blue Highway](#) guide, which is used to showcase NSW cruise ports and experiences to cruise lines and stakeholders.

The development and distribution of cruise shore excursions, including tours and visitor attractions, is also supported to increase visitor economy outcomes from visiting cruise ships. This includes workshops and resources through the NSW First Program and familiarisation visits for cruise ground handlers.

Industry Insights

Latest Figures On International Arrivals

New [Australian Bureau of Statistics data](#) shows there were 230,460 short-term visitor arrivals to NSW in August 2023, 81.5% of pre-pandemic levels in August 2019. The three leading source countries for NSW were: New Zealand (29,490 trips) China (27,370) and United States (26,180). For visitor arrivals to Australia, 603,360 short-term trips were recorded, which was 23.5% lower than the pre-COVID level in August 2019. In August 2023 there were 48,770 international student arrivals to Australia, an increase of 8,120 students compared with the corresponding month of the previous year. The number of student arrivals in August 2023 was 11.3% lower than the pre-COVID levels in August 2019.

Unyoked And Alltrails Call For Participants For Global Nature Study

Australian based sustainable tiny-home operator [Unyoked](#) and the world's largest and most-used outdoor platform, [AllTrails](#) have announced [The Global Nature Study](#) collaboration. Calling on participants from Australia and overseas, the study aims to uncover the specific scientific benefits of time spent in nature, and if time outside can genuinely help manage the ups and downs of modern life. Tracking key metrics like stress, creativity and sleep, participants will have their results analysed by medical experts. As part of the study, 100 complimentary two-night stays in an Unyoked cabin and an AllTrails+ subscription are on offer to applicants to take part in.

Around The Region

What's On In Lismore And Surrounds

Find out what's on in Lismore, Nimbin and Villages with the new monthly guide, featuring key events, tour and activities, entertainment, local attractions, markets and more. [Find more information here](#).

New Visitor Centre For Barrington Coast

Farewell leaky old VIC and hello to the brand new Visitor Ideas Centre at 4 Lake Street, Forster. New premises, new merchandise options, new technology but the same friendly helpful advice to visitors and residents. Call in to say hello.



North Coast Destinations Still Flaunting Availability For Christmas

This article in [The Daily Telegraph](#) highlights opportunities for the North Coast for holiday season accommodation availability.

SMH Good Food Guide 2024 Awards Announced

Congratulations to the following North Coast winners of the Sydney Morning Herald's Good Food Guide Awards!

[Regional Restaurant Of The Year](#) *The best beyond metro limits, a celebration of its surrounds with a strong connection to the local community.* [Bistro Livi, Murwillumbah](#)

[New Regional Restaurant Of The Year](#) *A restaurant working with local farms and suppliers to offer something new and exciting for the region and its visitors.* [Bar Heather, Byron Bay](#)

[Oceania Cruises Service Excellence Award](#) *Executes the highest standard of service relevant to their establishment, from attitude and skill to knowledge and personality.* [Alice Dwyer, Pipit, Pottsville](#)

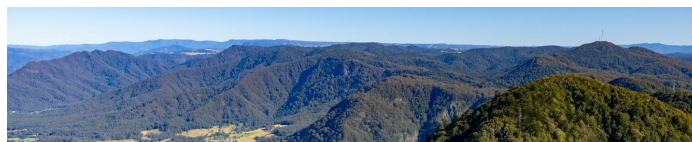
[See the full list of winners here.](#)

Dorrigo And Bindarri National Parks Plans Open For Comment

The Dorrigo National Park, Bindarri National Park and Bindarri State Conservation Area [draft plan of management](#) is being publicly exhibited until **15 January 2024**.

[Draft master plans](#) for the proposed Dorrigo Escarpment great walk and the Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre are also on public exhibition until 15 January 2024. These subsidiary draft plans describe the proposed location and design of the iconic new multi-day walking experience, and replacement visitor centre and elevated walkway for Dorrigo National Park.

An online information and question and answer session will be held **11 am to 12 pm, Wednesday 8 November 2023**. [Please register to attend the session](#) and submit your questions. NPWS will also host drop-in community information sessions at the Dorrigo Rainforest Centre from **1 pm to 4 pm, Friday 17 November 2023** and **9 am to 12 pm, Saturday 18 November 2023**. This is an opportunity to meet with National Parks and Wildlife Service staff and discuss the draft plans before submitting your feedback. Please phone the Coffs Coast Area on 02 6652 0900 to book a 20-minute timeslot.



Industry Development And Other Opportunities

LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER - DNSW Inbound Strategy Workshop

Join Destination NSW for a free, full-day Inbound Strategy workshop to find out how to sell your accommodation or bookable experience to international travellers via the inbound travel trade. Learn more about international markets, tailoring experiences to inbound guests, how to work with distributors and steps to get started.

WHEN: Thursday 2 November 2023 10.00am - 4.00pm

WHERE: Twin Town Services Club, Wharf St, Tweed Heads

[REGISTER NOW](#)

The Inbound Strategy Workshop will suit visitor economy businesses, including accommodation, tours and activities, and visitor attractions including wineries, distilleries and breweries that:

- Offer bookable tours, stays or experiences
- Have a presence in the domestic market, with at least one year of operational experience
- Are currently connected with or considering working with an online travel agent
- Are exploring opportunities in the international market.



SAVE THE DATE - Selling Experiences Online Workshop - Port Macquarie

Join Destination NSW for this half-day Sell Online workshop and find out how to increase bookings through online sales - both direct and indirect - by using online booking software, creating effective ATDW-Online listings, and working with online travel agents (OTAs) to grow online visibility.

WHEN: Thursday 7 December 2023, 10.30am - 14.30pm

WHERE: Port Macquarie (venue to be confirmed)

Tourism Australia Sentiment Survey

Every few months Tourism Australia conduct a sentiment survey - they'd love your feedback again this time around to let them know how recovery and the future is tracking. [Complete the 2 minute survey here](#), before 1 November 2023.

Tourism Australia Industry Webinar

The next Tourism Australia Industry Webinar will take place on **Friday 3 November** at 11am. Along with an update from Tourism Australia's Managing Director, Phillipa Harrison, Tourism Western Australia's Managing Director, Carolyn Turnbull will give an update on all things Western Australia. Tourism Australia's Regional General Manager, The America's, Chris Allison will also provide an update on the North American Market. [Register to attend.](#)

Simple Steps For Small Businesses To Stay Cyber Secure

There is a growing need for businesses to better understand their risks online and to be proactive against scams, email attacks, and malicious software.

ID Support NSW has developed a webpage containing information and tips on how to stay cyber secure, as well as free interactive learning modules and printable checklists to help businesses regardless of their size or budget.

ID Support NSW also runs a free fortnightly webinar where business owners can learn directly from experts on how to keep customers' personal information safe. [Find more information here](#) and [read media release](#).

ATEC Online Learning For Hosts

Destination NSW has partnered with the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) to provide free access for internationally-ready businesses to three ATEC Host online learning modules: China Host, India Host and Accessible & Inclusive Host. The training shows how to attract and service visitors by being culture-ready, product and service ready and marketing and trade ready, plus how to work effectively with key travel distributors. The training is delivered via ATEC's E-Learning platform and is self-directed, interactive and engaging. [Find more information here.](#)

Building Business Success with the Northern Rivers Rail Trail

Lismore City Council, Richmond Valley Council and Tweed Shire Council are collaborating to deliver a program to help businesses leverage opportunities for the Northern Rivers Rail Trail. The program will help businesses to understand the economic opportunities surrounding the Trail and how they can capitalise on the new regional asset.

It will include insights from ambassadors from the Tweed section of the Rail Trail, updates on project construction at Casino and Lismore and knowledge sharing to support business growth and diversification.

When: 16 November 2023 at 5.30pm

Where: Two Mates Brewing, Lismore

[Register here.](#)





Elevate Homegrown Events

This webinar from Tilma Group will discuss how LGA's can elevate their homegrown place-based events to give their destination a competitive edge and to support the needs of their community. It will explore the difference between homegrown events and externally acquired events and how to get a balance that supports the aspirations of your community. 15 November 2023. [Register here.](#)

Don't Risk It

Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) and Earth Check have released a '[Don't Risk It' guide](#) to assist tourism businesses to prevent, respond and recover from a disaster. The guide offers case studies, templates and considerations relating to:

- risks
- impacts
- continuity
- cash flow
- insurance
- cancellation policies
- media
- bookings
- staff

Funding And Other Opportunities

Access to Government Grant Information

All government grants information is available for free from official sources - be wary of scam websites that charge fees for grant-related services. Check out these [tips for accessing grant information safely](#).

Small Projects Grants (quick response) - individuals and groups 2023/24

Small Project Grants (Quick Response) supports professional development opportunities for NSW-based professional artists, groups and arts and cultural workers (including museum workers) that are time sensitive and respond to short notice invitations with career-building significance. **Closes 27 November 2023.**

Regional Skills Relocation Grant

This grant assists regional NSW businesses in identified industries to attract skilled and specialised employees from NSW metropolitan areas, interstate or internationally, to regional NSW. **Closes 15 December 2023**

Fee Free Traineeships

The NSW Government is paying the course cost for 70,000 new traineeships - meaning trainees undertaking a government funded traineeship course no longer face a student fee of up to \$1,000. **Closes 31 December 2023**

Lights On Doors Open stipend program

The '*Lights On, Doors Open*' program has been established to relieve the pressures faced by volunteer-led museums and Aboriginal cultural spaces in NSW. **Closes when funds are exhausted.**

North Coast Product Development

Positive Energy Adventure & Retreats Announce A Brand New Range Of Hikes For 2024

Following customer feedback, Positive Energy Adventure and Retreats have created a range of new offerings to cater for the time poor, the overnights, the budget-friendly, or those who prefer to pick their own pace and path. [Find out more about the new trips on offer here.](#)

Little & Local - Diamond Beach

This new cafe within Serenity Diamond Beach Resort offers fresh and tasty pizzas, calzone, ever-changing pies, delicious baked goods from Blue Wren Baking plus a whole lot more. Try a super delicious and super healthy salad of roast veg, quinoa and feta; or the bacon and egg pie with onion jam. Coffee is from Peak Coffee Roasters just up the road so you know it's good.

Bago Maze And Wine Proudly Celebrates 30 Years Of Winemaking Under The Bago Label

Filled with excitement and nostalgia, Bago Winery recently marked their 30th year by uncorking a timeless treasure, their very first wine, a Pinot Noir Chardonnay dating back to 1993. Thirty years after its creation, this aged sparkling proved to be a delight, a testament to their unwavering dedication and expertise. Despite being stored for three decades, its integrity and enchanting bubbles remained intact. Full of history and layers of flavour, reminding us of the journey that led to this extraordinary milestone. For Bago, this sparkling represents a symbol of the legacy that has been built, a legacy that we continue to carry forward with pride. [Read more here.](#)

Barrington Grazing Co.'s New Grazing Boxes

Barrington Grazing Co have introduced grazing boxes ready to savour, for breakfast, a picnic lunch or a lazy afternoon. Select a delicious grazing box full of local goodies including cheese from [Barrington Coast Creamery](#).

Linga Longa Cottage - Wingham

This farmstay in the lush Manning Valley at Cedar Party near Wingham sits amongst rolling hills on a 65 hectare beef cattle farm. Cattle, chickens and guinea fowl will keep you company, and the three dogs will welcome you!

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](#).

Lakeside Festival

A boutique weekend festival for all ages at beautiful Forster-Tuncurry including Lakeside Laughs on Friday night, Lakeside Music Festival on Saturday and Lakeside Long Lunch at various food and hospitality venues all day Sunday.

Enjoy brilliant live music with a gorgeous backdrop of the crystal blue waters of Wallis Lake. Great views, shady lawns and a single intimate stage create your perfect zone to chill out or dance till you drop. **3-5 November 2023**

Coffs Coast Festival of Motor Sport

Rev your engines and mark your calendar for the 2023 Coffs Coast Festival of Motor Sport. This November, the region comes alive with events from Show & Shine to Off-Road Racing, promising high-octane excitement across motorsports of all kinds. The Festival will start with a combined Car and Bike Motor Show on at the top level car park at Park Beach Plaza with plenty of fun for the whole family.

Other events will be spread over the four weekends of November, including Karts, Motorcycle Racing, Off Road Racing, Hill Climbs, Rally Cross and Speedway finishing on the weekend. **Commences 4 November 2023.**

Bellingen Shire Arts Trail

Visit up to twenty-six studios, workshops, shops and galleries throughout the Bellingen Shire, listening to music and poetry. Have the opportunity to chat with over fifty artists at the venues and at social events. **10-12 November 2023.**

[Flow Maclean and Lismore](#)

Gather together for theatre under the stars at FLOW, a free outdoor community event celebrating kinship, culture and connection. Told through dance, poetry, video projection and rap, Flow is a yarn about Yaegl country and its neighbouring nations. **16-17 November on Maclean, 23-25 November in Lismore.**

[All Walls Street Art Festival](#)

Explore the All Walls Street Art Festival, a groundbreaking event igniting creativity in Coffs Harbour's city centre. Experience the fusion of art and urban space, turning the ordinary into extraordinary. **10-20 November 2023.**

[Coffs Coast Craft Beer and Music Festival](#)

The Coffs Coast Craft Beer and Music Festival is at the Hoey Moey. There will be 25+ craft breweries and 7 bands, plus a DJ until late! **18 November 2023.**



[Clarence Craft Beer Festival](#)

Come along for the first Clarence Craft Beer Festival at The Crown Hotel, Grafton. Featuring 24 local and national breweries. Come along for amazing food and drinks on the banks of the Clarence River. This is a free event but tickets are needed. This will sell out so secure your tickets now! **19 November 2023.**

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