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## North Coast News & Views No. 179

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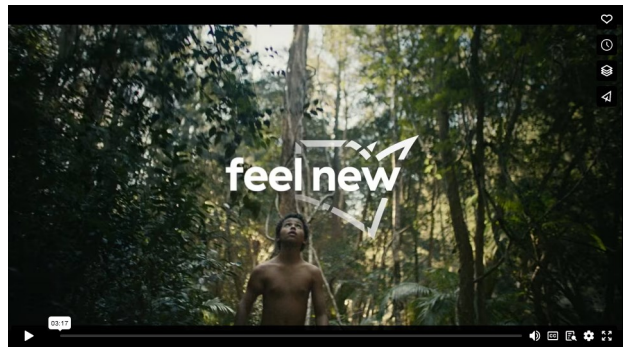
### How The Feel New Brand Has Turbocharged Visitor Economy Growth

Destination NSW is marking the second anniversary of the [Feel New](#) visitor brand launch by celebrating its positive impact on the NSW visitor economy. Feel New underpins Destination NSW's marketing activity to promote Sydney and regional NSW by tapping into the unparalleled feelings that visitors experience when travelling throughout the state.

Building the visitor brand is a key pillar of the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030, which is the blueprint to achieving the shared vision of making NSW the premier visitor economy of the Asia Pacific, contributing \$65 billion in visitor expenditure by 2030.

Since its launch in October 2021, Feel New-branded campaigns have delivered more than \$230 million in incremental visitor expenditure in NSW and generated more than 6.9 million leads to industry and more than 11,000 pieces of media coverage.

Destination NSW shared data on the success of the Feel New campaign at the NSW Visitor Economy Forum earlier this month. [Watch a video here](#) to learn more.



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### Update On The Creation Of The Great Koala National Park

A Great Koala National Park on the state's Mid North Coast is a step closer, with the establishment of 3 advisory panels to provide input into the creation of the park.

Last Friday, NSW Premier Chris Minns, Minister for the Environment Penny Sharpe and Minister for Agriculture and Regional NSW Tara Moriarty, visited Bongil Bongil National Park near Coffs Harbour to see firsthand the areas that will form the park and meet scientists who are using drones to improve the accuracy of the NSW koala count.

The three advisory panels representing the views of industry, the community and Aboriginal groups will give feedback on the process of assessing land for inclusion in the national park. They will also provide information on economic, social, ecological and cultural matters.

[Read media release.](#)

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### Proposed Reforms To Outdoor Dining On Private Land And Live Music Venues

The NSW Government is proposing a simple planning pathway for registered clubs and food and drink premises to set up outdoor dining on private land such as laneways, bowling greens and open spaces. The planning changes will allow registered clubs and food and drink premises to use adjacent private land for outdoor dining through a complying development pathway, rather than having to submit a development application.

[Make a submission before 16 November 2023.](#)

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### Caravan Industry Focusing In On Accessibility Through New Partnership

Caravan Industry Association of Australia is pleased to announce a new industry partnership with Accessible Accommodation (The Accessible Group), focused on delivering new accessible tourism experiences in Australia's booming caravan and camping sector. Australia's caravanning and camping appeal transcends age, the draw of seeing our beautiful country remains strong for all demographics. While the sector has a wide-ranging appeal, the industry wants to ensure no one is left out and that it is open and accessible to all Australians, this means all ages and abilities. Caravan holiday park operators have a great opportunity to tap into this increasing demand through the provision of accessible accommodation, facilities, and activity areas.

[Read media release.](#)

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### Turn The Beat Around: First Live Music Audit Is Part Of Venue Revival

For the first time, the NSW Government will conduct a survey of artists and professionals working in the music industry in a bid to build a picture of the challenges faced and what can be done to restore the live scene to a position of strength in our cultural fabric.

NSW has lost half its live music venues over the past decade, with just 137 remaining, according to current Liquor and Gaming data. As part of the music revival, the government will seek to ensure the survival of these venues as the recently established Sound NSW begins its work with the live music industry.

Launching during Australian Music Month, participants will be asked to assess the strengths of the industry as well as the factors that might be holding the industry back, from noise restrictions, venue closures, COVID-19 and cost of living pressures.

People working in the industry are strongly encouraged to provide insights, including artists, managers, promoters, venue operators, roadies, audio engineers, lighting and technical teams, ticket and merchandise retailers and more. This feedback will shape policy decisions and have a direct impact on the future of the sector.

The survey will be open until 15 January 2024. [Complete the survey here.](#)

[Read media release.](#)

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## Mark Greaves Leaves The Tourism Group

The Tourism Group which manages the NSW Australian Visitor Information Centre (AVIC) program last week, formally bid farewell to Director Mark Greaves and thanked him for his commitment to the Program.

For North Coast AVIC managers, [Carlie Mitchell](#) will continue in her role supported by The Tourism Group's long-serving General Manager [Melanie Sands](#).

Destination North Coast thanks Mark and wishes him well in his future endeavours.

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## Industry Insights

### NVS And IVS Snapshots Released.

Tourism Research Australia's NVS snapshot for the month of [August 2023](#) is now published. It provides statistics on how Australian residents travelled in your state or territory and nationally during this period. In August 2023, Australian residents took 9.0 million overnight trips and spent \$9.7 billion.

International visitation to Australia continues to recover, with 551,000 trips recorded in the month of August 2023. Spend in Australia was estimated at \$2.1 billion in [August 2023](#).

### A New Data Framework For The Visitor Economy

Developing a set of long-term visitor economy indicators within a consolidated new framework - the 'Longitudinal Indicators for the Visitor Economy (LIVE) framework' - is one of the latest projects being progressed by Austrade's Tourism Research Australia (TRA).

This framework was a key recommendation from the THRIVE 2030 Industry Data and Expert Analysis (IDEA) Working Group, whose [final report was published this month](#).

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## Around The Region

### The Macleay Valley Coast Featured in TrulyAus - Rex Airlines Magazine

Keep your eyes peeled aboard your next regional flight for features on the [Macleay Valley Coast in TrulyAus](#), the inflight magazine for Rex Airlines, Pel-Air Aviation and National Jet Express (NJE).

### Monet In Murwillumbah

One of the world's most famous artworks - *Meules, milieu du jour* [Haystacks, midday], 1890 by Claude Monet - is now on display at the [Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre](#), as part of the National Gallery of Australia's Sharing the National Collection initiative.

The \$174 million masterpiece by French Impressionist Monet was officially welcomed to the region with a special ceremony at the award-winning regional gallery in Murwillumbah this week. *Meules, milieu du jour* [Haystacks, midday] will be on display until October 2025.



### Back Lismore Campaign

In response to the community's call for a shift in narrative from 'flood city' to 'open', Lismore City Council is proud to announce the 'Back Lismore' campaign. This initiative is a call to action and a storytelling platform aimed at reigning excitement and pride in the region.

Everyone who lives, works, visits, or plays in the region are invited to embrace the many ways in which they can back Lismore. Launched in October, it includes a six-month grassroots marketing campaign across the Lismore LGA. [Find more information here.](#)

### AHA Celebrates Best NSW Hotels

The Australian Hotels Association (AHA) has recognised the best of the hospitality industry at its annual [NSW Awards for Excellence](#). We congratulate these North Coast stars who came home winners:

- Best Retail Liquor Outlet - WINNER - Tacking Point Tavern, Port Macquarie
- Best Traditional Pub Accommodation (UNDER \$130) - WINNER - Tea Gardens Hotel, Tea Gardens
- Best Cheap Eat Meal (Under \$15) - WINNER - Fernhill Tavern, Port Macquarie
- Regional Chef of the Year - WINNER - Damien Duggan, Crown Hotel, Grafton

### Lismore DMP Open For Feedback

The draft Destination Management Plan (DMP) has recently been completed for Lismore Local Government Area and is now ready for public comment.

The draft DMP provides a collective focus, strategic direction and actions for sustainably growing and managing the Lismore Local Government Area's visitor economy to 2028 and beyond. It's designed to maximise the benefits of tourism for the region, safeguarding and enhancing our natural and cultural assets for local communities and businesses of Lismore, Nimbin and villages now and into the future. [Feedback for the draft DMP](#) is due by **Friday 15 December 2023**.

#### Port Macquarie Restaurant Triumphs In TripAdvisor Awards

TripAdvisor award Travellers' Choice Best of the Best to restaurants with a high volume of above-and-beyond reviews and opinions from our community over a 12-month period. Each winner has passed rigorous trust and safety standards. Fewer than 1% of TripAdvisor's 8 million listings are awarded Best of the Best, signifying the highest level of excellence in travel. Congratulations to [The Stunned Mullet](#) in Port Macquarie for making the list. [See the full list of winners here](#).

#### Reflections Marks Growth In Year In Review

Reflections Holiday Parks invested \$27 million in the 2023 financial year to improve its parks for its guests and contributed \$9.6m to communities and nature reserves, the organisation's Year in Review document reveals.

The [FY23 Year In Review](#) notes that Reflections - a Category One Crown Land Manager which reinvests profit back into its parks and close to 9,800 hectares of land it cares for on behalf of the NSW public - also achieved the following:

- Welcomed 2 million guests across its 39 parks, camping grounds and unique accommodation, contributing \$111M (up 33% year-on-year) in economic value to regional NSW.
- Grew its accommodation offering with 84 new roofed accommodation facilities, up 15% on the previous year and made possible via a \$28M loan from the NSW Government
- Achieved \$72.4M in revenue and reinvested profits back into Crown land parks and reserves for the community's enjoyment
- Launched its first Reconciliation Action Plan and developed a cultural tourism program that has seen a raft of Aboriginal educational activities hosted in its holiday parks.

On the North Coast this translates to:

- 23 locations
- 2,668 caravan and camping sites
- 407 roofed accommodation
- 560,300 area nights
- \$79.3M economic value



## Industry Development And Other Opportunities

#### DNC Industry Networking - Forster

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

We are excited to co-host this event with the Destination Barrington Coast team and invite industry to the new Visitor Information Centre at Forster Civic Centre.

- **WHAT:** Afternoon Industry Networking
- **WHEN:** Tuesday 21 November 2023 5.00pm-6.30pm
- **WHERE:** Visitor Information Centre, Forster Civic Centre, 4 Lake St, Forster

[RSVP is required by Friday 17 November, 2023](#) and for catering purposes, please include any dietary restrictions.

We look forward to connecting with industry in region and meeting in the Mid Coast region.

#### 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. If you haven't already done so, please [complete the 2 minute survey here](#), before 10 November 2023.

#### 2024 ATE Business Support - New Product Pathway

Destination NSW is supporting NSW businesses to attend [Australian Tourism Exchange 2024 \(ATE24\)](#), delivered by Tourism Australia. From 19-23 May 2024, ATE24 will bring together Australian visitor economy businesses and global distribution partners to conduct scheduled business appointments and participate in networking events over four days. Destination NSW is supporting the registration cost for new sellers to attend through its New Product Pathway program.

Established visitor economy businesses such as tour, accommodation or attraction providers that are actively working with one or more inbound tour operators and have not previously attended ATE, can apply. Expressions of interest are open to businesses that register as a new seller at ATE24 by **10 November 2023**. [Find more information here](#).

Applications to attend ATE24 as a Seller are now open and will close on **Friday, 10 November 2023**. Completed applications for ATE24 will be assessed against the [selection criteria](#). These criteria, along with the event policy govern participation at the event.

#### Applications Open For ATE 2024 Solutions Hub

Tourism Australia invites applications from eligible businesses, interested in joining the Solutions Hub at the Australian Tourism Exchange 2024 (ATE24). The Solutions Hub is suited to B2B organisations that provide services and/or solutions relevant to the tourism industry. For further information and eligibility criteria, visit the [event website](#) or contact [atesellers@tourism.australia.com](mailto:atesellers@tourism.australia.com). Applications close **30 November 2023**.

#### DNSW Sell Online Workshop Port Macquarie

Join Destination NSW for a free, half-day **Sell Online** workshop to find out how you can increase bookings for your tour, attraction or accommodation by selling online. Get tips and insights on taking online bookings, driving direct bookings through your online listings, and reaching more visitors with online travel agents.

- **WHEN:** Thursday 7 December 2023 10.30am - 2.30pm
- **WHERE:** Sails Port Macquarie by Rydges, Park St, Port Macquarie

[REGISTER NOW](#)

The Sell Online Workshop will suit visitor economy businesses that offer bookable experiences, including accommodation, tours and activities, and visitor attractions including wineries, distilleries, breweries and farm gates.

The workshop is part of the [NSW First Program](#), delivered by Destination NSW to assist businesses to develop, promote and sell world-class visitor experiences.

#### **Training Needs Survey For NSW Hospitality Sector**

Help create life-changing impact. Complete the Hospitality & Tourism Training Needs Survey being conducted by TAFE NSW. Take the next 9 minutes to share your valuable industry insights and recommendations that will inform training and funding across the hospitality sector over the next 12 months. [Complete the survey here.](#)

#### **Forces And Trends Of Regional Tourism Webinar**

This webinar considers the current state of regional visitor economies, and the forces and trends helping and hindering tourism destination and attendant visitor economy development at a regional level. Hosted by ART, the webinar will be held at 12.30pm on 6 December 2023. [Register here.](#)

#### **National Skills Agreement Supporting NSW Journey To Net Zero**

Following the signing of the National Skills Agreement the NSW Government is continuing to bolster its commitment to reskill NSW and transform the economy to Net Zero with TAFE NSW launching eight new microskills related to renewables. [Find more information here.](#)

#### **Free Guide for Hosting LGBTQ+ Events Industry Dev Section?**

ACON has developed a free guide for tips and advice to help support councils in their important work supporting and hosting [LGBTQ+ events](#). The guide aims to help Government bodies such as local councils to confidently support their LGBTQ+ residents and families, and offer safe, fun, and engaging opportunities for LGBTQ+ people, their families, and allies to gather.

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### **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](#).

#### **EV Destination Charging Grants**

Applications are now open for small to medium regional tourism businesses and councils to install EV charging infrastructure. Successful applicants will receive 75 per cent of the cost of purchasing and installing up to four charge points at each site. Around 3,000 EV chargers will be installed at tourism destinations under the \$10 million allocated for round two of the Destination Charging Program. Destinations could include motels, wineries, cafes, restaurants, natural attractions, visitor information centres, museums, zoos and local government facilities. Following the successful rollout of the chargers, a series of EV tourist drives will be developed to promote EV travel across NSW. **Closes 23 May 2024.**

#### **Recreational Fishing Trust Grants**

The next round of Recreational Fishing Trust Grants has opened, through which fishing clubs and local Councils can receive funding for projects to improve and promote recreational fishing in their areas, whether it's by rivers, lakes or the ocean. This year, the grants program will have an additional focus on encouraging applications for projects that will help open-up fishing opportunities for people with disabilities, such as fishing platforms in popular fishing spots that don't have one or that need an upgrade. **Closes 18 December 2023**

#### **Surf Club Facility Program**

NSW Surf Life Saving Clubs can apply for up to \$5.25 million for new and improved facilities following the opening of the Surf Club Facility Program. Clubs can receive grants up to \$1 million for the upgrade, restoration or construction of these critical surf life saving facilities. The Program features three categories with **Category 1 closing on 11 December 2023 and Categories 2 and 3 closing on 31 January 2024.**

#### **Community Events Fund Extension**

Recipients of funding through the current round of the Community Events Program (CEP) are now eligible to apply for an extension to allow for more time to hold their planned events. Recipients can submit a variation request to their funding arrangement to extend event delivery up to 31 January 2024.

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### **North Coast Product Development**

#### **Lord Howe Island Directory**

Lord Howe Island interactive map, directory and guide has been launched and [can be found here](#).

#### **99 On Park Fine Dining Restaurant - Coffs Harbour**

For the perfect fine dining experience, 99 On Park Restaurant and Bar adds quality to the Coffs Harbour eating scene with each menu item carefully crafted by talented chefs.

#### **Paddle Routes In The Richmond Valley**

Get on the water and explore the Richmond Valley on one of the many paddle routes. With journeys through Woodburn, Coraki, Casino and more, you can find wonderful places and watch for wildlife by canoe, kayak or paddle board.

#### **Maria River Distillery - Crescent Head**

A truly unique Australian small batch distillery at Crescent Head. Locally farmed, responsibly sourced, sustainably distilled. All based around the tradition of old school spirit making, everything is made onsite, in small batch production.

#### **The Green Room at Byron**

Byron Bay's newest live music venue is a new covered event space at the site of Byron's Bluesfest Events Farm! The Green Room, is available for live shows, corporate events, weddings or private celebrations. Capacity 1500 people.

#### **Bruno's Lager - Coffs Coast**

Bruno's Lager is a collaboration that has been brewing behind the scenes for quite some time. [Woolgoolga Brewing Co.](#) have joined with [Bruno's restaurant](#) in Bellingen to develop this exclusive lager, available only at Bruno's in Bellingen or the Brewery.



#### **Gigi's Burgers and Diner - Forster**

There's a 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.

#### **Cleo's Cottage - Gloucester**

Cleo's Cottage is perfect for a family holiday or a retreat with a few friends and is dog friendly on request for small and medium dogs. Located within a few minutes' drive or walk to Gloucester's main street for shops, cafes and pubs, Cleo's is the place to breathe in the country air.

#### **Avion Retreat - The Tweed**

Avion Retreat's architecturally designed glasshouses, located close to Tyalgum, are equal parts stylish, comfortable and sustainable. The glasshouses are fully off-grid with solar power and rainwater tanks and come with Australian-made vegan toiletries. There's also a permanent habitat rehabilitation zone and 3,000 new native tree plantings, many being koala-friendly to re-establish habitat corridors.



### [The Moorings Lakehouse - Coomba Bay](#)

Experience an extraordinary 5 star organic farm retreat nestled on its own serene peninsula with a 200m lake frontage of Wallis Lake. Make The Moorings Lakehouse your very own garden of Eden, a wilderness sanctuary of wellbeing & relaxation.



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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](#).

#### [Big Scrub Rainforest Day 2023](#)

Big Scrub Rainforest Day Celebrations return this year with walks, talks and workshops across 4 days. In its 25th year, the annual celebration includes over 15 events across 10 Big Scrub locations, featuring Science in the Pub at the Eltham, a schools community planting day, seed propagation workshops and walks in Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens, Bodhi Tree Forest Monastery, Dorrobbie Grass, Booyong Nature Reserve, Victoria Park Nature Reserve and Cape Byron Distillery. **23-26 November 2023.**



#### [35th Rotary Cartoon Awards](#)

The National Cartoon Gallery at Coffs Harbour invites you to discover the latest set of cartoon contenders for the annual Rotary Cartoon Awards. This fantastic collection of cartoons and caricatures covers the political and social life of Australia over the past year. This year's Special Category is 'Artificial Intelligence', which is quite timely and ensures a whole lot of laughs. **24 November-17 March 2024**

#### [NSW State Touch Cup - Port Macquarie](#)

This is the premier New South Wales Touch Football representative event and is conducted in Port Macquarie each year commencing on the first Friday in December. This is the State Championship and is open to all New South Wales Affiliated Members. **1-3 December 2023.**