



## North Coast News & Views Issue 185

### Destination North Coast In Region

Last week, the DNC team joined Clarence Valley Council staff and Jane Laverty, Regional Director Northern Rivers for Business NSW, in Yamba, Harwood and Maclean, meeting operators, doing site inspections and checking out some new and growing businesses in the area.

Visits included [Angourie Resort](#) (recently becoming part of NRMA Parks and Resorts) where we met with the new General Manager and event team and did a site inspection of the accommodation and conferencing facilities. We visited the [Wobbly Chook Brewing Co](#) which also includes Yamba Central Accommodation and The Henhouse rooftop pizza bar. What an awesome establishment and family business. No surprises, a visit to [The Surf Yamba](#) did not disappoint and this 12 room boutique accommodation complete with spacious designer interiors, stunning rooftop terraces and a view to die for being right above Yamba Beach and looking out to the lighthouse. Formerly Clarence Distillery and now [Yamba Distilling & Bar](#) with a fantastic new gin garden made a perfect end to our Yamba site inspection. Meetings back at Council Chambers and a quick circuit of the Maclean Lookout rounded out the day.

It is always good to be in region and meeting with operators who drive the North Coast visitor economy.



### FEEL MORE, LIVE MORE Campaign Returns

Destination NSW will continue its cooperative marketing partnership with Caravan & Camping Industry Association NSW in 2024 via the 'Feel More, Live More' campaign.

The campaign underpins Destination NSW's 'Feel New' brand, developed to differentiate NSW from other destinations by focusing on its unique and diverse natural wonders and cultural offerings.

[Find more information here.](#)

### Great Southern Nights

[Great Southern Nights](#) is back and will showcase established household names to emerging talents and grassroots acts, across 17 spectacular nights across Sydney and NSW. In the Northern Rivers, there are gigs in Byron Bay, The Tweed, Brunswick Heads, Ballina, Bangalow and Lismore with a star-studded line-up from 8 - 24 March 2024. The line up, including Ball Park Music, Gordi, Xavier Rudd, JK-47, Jon Stevens and more, is gearing up to embrace the sun soaked Northern Rivers region.

See live media activity piece in [Concrete Playground](#) featuring the Northern Rivers.

To capitalise on the opportunity of these events, ARIA, working in partnership with Destination NSW to deliver Great Southern Nights, have put together a [Toolkit which has region specific assets](#) including a link with a welcome document identifying how local businesses and stakeholders can utilise the kit. Northern Rivers operators will find posters, flyers, email banners and social media collateral for your use.



### Welcome To Country Undergoes Strategic Restructure

In their commitment to delivering incredible First Nations products and experiences, Welcome to Country are undergoing a strategic restructuring to operate independently as a First Nations led and operated social enterprise. This process involves streamlining their operations to be more efficient, allowing them to focus on what they do best - providing exceptional products and experiences to consumers. Their continued dedication to connecting their customers to the world's oldest continuing cultures and languages will be their main focus.

Connect with [Welcome to Country](#) to stay across their updates and to search for First Nations products and experiences.

## Taking Action To Improve Sustainability

Sustainability is the subject of a new government-funded research venture, the [Greening Hotels Project](#) led by the Griffith Institute for Tourism. The aim of the research is to work with a diverse range of accommodation providers to achieve reductions in resource use in mainstream tourism.

The project challenges the view that pro-environmental attitudes are a pre-requisite for pro-environmental behaviours, and in doing so promotes redesigning social practices in accommodation to achieve greater sustainability outcomes and guest experiences.

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### AIME High

The [2024 Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event](#) (AIME) is shaping up to be the biggest in a decade. More than 3500 buyers are expected to descend on the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) from 19-21 February, alongside 570 exhibitors and more than 600 buyers from 33 countries. This represents growth of 63 per cent on AIME 2023. For the first time since 2019, international destinations are registered to attend.

Destination North Coast, via our Business Events Program, and in collaboration with Destination NSW, will be in attendance to present the North Coast's business events portfolio.

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### Closing The Gap Report Released

The NSW Government has welcomed the Productivity Commission's review on progress towards improved life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities across the country. The report notes that NSW is one of the few jurisdictions nationwide to have amended its cabinet and budget processes to reflect the requirements of the National Agreement. Over the next 12 months the NSW Government will continue to deliver the NSW Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2022-2024, which includes 142 initiatives supported by \$221 million over four years.

[Find more information here.](#)

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## Industry Insights

### NVS And IVS Monthly Snapshots

Tourism Research Australia data shows stronger [domestic travel results in November 2023](#) compared to November 2022. Spend was \$8.7 billion, up 3%. There were 9.2 million overnight trips, up 8% cent on November 2022. Visitors spent 28.6 million nights away. This was on par with November 2022. Australians took 3.3 million holiday trips (down 4% year on year), three million trips for visiting friends and relatives (up 19% year on year) and 2.5 million business trips (up 14% year on year).

[International visitor expenditure and nights spent in Australia in November 2023](#) exceeded November 2019 levels by four per cent and 13 per cent respectively. Trips to Australia were 81% of 2019 levels. International visitors spent \$2.4 billion during their trips, took 627,000 international trips to Australia and had 22.9 million nights away. Holiday travel accounted for 259,000 trips (71% of 2019 levels), with spend of \$891 million (95% of 2019 levels).

### Tourism Forecast For Australia 2023-28

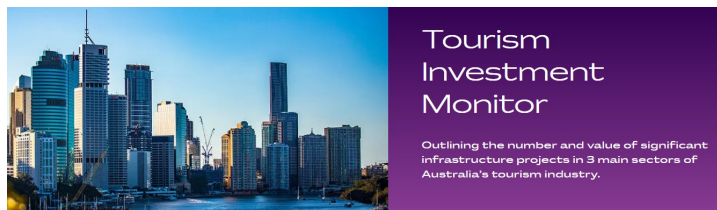
This report compiled by Tourism Research Australia summarises the outlook for domestic and international tourism in Australia and contains a written summary and analysis of the forecast data. It presents an overview of the outlook and discusses the drivers and implications of the projected path forward for the tourism sector. It also notes some key risks to the forecasts. [Find more information here.](#)

### Tourism Investment Monitor

Tourism Research Australia's [Tourism Investment Monitor 2022-23](#) is now published. It provides a point-in-time measure of planned and committed investment in fixed assets related to Australia's tourism sector.

The 2022-23 tourism investment pipeline included 307 projects valued at \$56.1 billion. The tourism investment pipeline represents major tourism-related projects with an estimated financial value of \$20 million or more in 3 main tourism segments:

- aviation
- art, recreation, and business services
- accommodation.



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## Around The Region

### City Of Coffs Harbour Event Funding Program

Looking to run an event on the Coffs Coast? Events play a significant role in attracting large volumes of new and repeat visitors to Coffs Harbour, as well as providing a vibrant backdrop of activity, entertainment, education and wellbeing for the residents of the broader Coffs Coast.

The City is currently accepting [submissions for events](#) planned to run prior to 30 June 2024. Applications will close 4pm Thursday 15 February, 2024.

### Byron Bay Bluesfest

As usual Byron Bay plays host to [Bluesfest](#) over the Easter long weekend, celebrating the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event. With too many headline acts to mention, visit the festival site for all details.

For the very first time, Bluesfest is introducing a return bus service to Lismore so festivalgoers can now pre-book this service to enjoy this much-loved festival. [Find bus ticket information here.](#)

### Get Set To Plunge Into Arts & Culture

Clarence Valley Council is proud to continue its support of a community-based initiative that has grown to be one of the most popular events on our annual calendar. The [Plunge Festival](#) in April 2024 shines a spotlight on Clarence Valley art and culture, our local creatives, and their businesses. With more than 120 exciting events and activities planned, there is something for everyone.



### Coffs Coast Marketing Campaign

Coffs Harbour City Council in partnership with Coffs Harbour Airport are encouraging travellers to find their 'Coff Switch' and choose to switch off from work-related stresses whilst on holiday. Where better to do

than the Coffs Coast, the first certified ECO Tourism Destination in NSW with its diverse array of accommodation offerings and experiences giving visitors plenty to see and do to keep them off their devices and not thinking about work. [Find information here.](#)

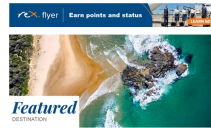
#### The Best NSW Beaches For 2024

Two NSW beaches have scored top 10 spots on the [Best Australian Beaches for 2024](#) list. Beach expert Brad Farmer AM chose from the almost 12,000 contenders found across Australia's mainland and surrounding islands, with Lagoon Beach on Lord Howe Island ranking seventh.

#### Macleay Dining Featured In REX EDM

As a part of a partnership with Truly Aus media, Dining on the Macleay has recently been featured in the REX flyer, an EDM with a reach of 810,000 subscribers. The EDM links to a story on their website which sees 30,000 web visitors monthly.

[See the story here.](#)



#### Dining on the Macleay

Foodie culture is alive and thriving on the Macleay Valley Coast. Buckle up into a slice of pizza, enjoy local treats and discover why the Macleay is becoming a top locale location.

[READ MORE](#)



#### All Access Footpath In Bellingen

A newly constructed footpath now runs from the Bellingen Golf Club, down to the Butter Factory at the eastern end of town, better connecting the CBD with the Butter Factory precinct. [Find more information here.](#)

## Industry Development And Other Opportunities

### Destination NSW Webinar: Creating Wellness Experiences

Join Destination NSW and wellness expert, Katherine Droga from Droga & Co., along with guest speakers, to explore opportunities for NSW visitor attraction, accommodation and tour and activity providers to create wellness experiences.

While wellness travel is often associated with spas, health resorts, and yoga retreats, NSW accommodation and experience providers can also add wellness elements into their visitor experiences.

In this session:

- Learn about wellness trends, the value of the sector and visitor expectations.
- Get practical tips to create wellness experiences.
- Hear how other visitor economy businesses weave wellness into their products.
- The session will include Q&A with the speakers.



The webinar is scheduled for 10.30am - 11.30am, Thursday, 29 February 2024. [Register here.](#)

This webinar is presented by Destination NSW as part of the [NSW First Program](#), designed to assist visitor economy businesses to develop, promote and sell world-class visitor experiences.

#### 2024 Tourism Australia Media Kit

The 2024 Australia Media Kit is available to view from the [Resources for Media page](#) on the Tourism Australia corporate website. Featuring over 80 pages, the media kit is packed with new PR content including: overviews of each state and territory, what's new and happening in the year to come and beyond, travel trends, and story ideas for international media.

#### Australian Regional Tourism Convention

Be a part of the much-anticipated 2024 Australian Regional Tourism Convention to be held in Mackay, QLD from 9-11 October. [Early bird registrations are now open.](#)

#### NSW Government Tackles Skills Shortage

Applications are open for the NSW Public Sector Apprentices and Trainees Program, delivering on the NSW Government's commitment to employ 1000 extra apprentices. [Find more information here.](#)

#### Cyber Security Help For Small Businesses

Have you read the Small Business Cyber Security Guide yet? Tourism businesses hold valuable and sensitive customer information. To support them in protecting this data against common cyber security threats, the Australian Security Directorate's Australian Cyber Security Centre (ASD ACSC) has published a:

- Small Business Cyber Security Guide
- Small Business Cyber Security Checklist.

[Find more information here.](#)

## Funding And Other Opportunities

Funding through grant programs can provide significant benefits to businesses and destinations, helping to drive economic growth, create jobs, and improve the visitor experience. Before commencing a grant application, please visit our [Funding and Grants page](#) for information and tips to support your application and a link to request a [Letter of Support from Destination North Coast.](#)

#### NSW Aboriginal Affairs Cultural Grants

The Aboriginal Affairs NSW Cultural Grants Program supports Aboriginal community organisations across NSW to celebrate Aboriginal culture and hold key cultural events and activities. Applicants can apply for grants from \$500 to \$20,000. **Closes 26 February 2024.**

#### Live Music Development Grant Opportunity

The Australian Government's National Cultural Policy Revive recognises the importance of the live music sector and provides support for the music industry.

The Live Music Australia program aims to support business ventures in local suburbs towns and regions across the country building capacity for a sustainable live music scene with strong community roots in all parts of Australia.

The program objectives are to:

- support the development growth and innovation of Australian contemporary live music by increasing performance opportunities for original contemporary music by Australian artists
- support a sustainable venue-based live music industry by building professional capacity within venues and growing and building audiences
- support partnerships collaboration and networks across the Australian live music industry.

**Closes 12 March 2024.**

#### Indigenous Languages and Arts Program

Supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to express, preserve and maintain their cultures through languages and arts activities around Australia. **Closes 12 March 2024.**

## North Coast Product Development

#### [Yamba Coastal Ride](#)

Experience the ultimate in luxury and convenience with Yamba Coastal Ride's Private Chauffeur service and airport meet and greet. Guests ride in style in a Toyota Granvia VX, featuring a high quality, spacious interior, and executive power seating designed for complete relaxation.

#### [Muddle Puddle - East Lismore](#)

Located in the East Lismore Shopping centre, and offering coffee, breakfast and Nepalese fusion lunch.

#### [Olive Wood Vegan - Alstonvale](#)

A newcomer to the Northern Rivers culinary scene is Olive Wood, offering plant-based cooking classes including pasta making classes, cooking retreats and bed and breakfast accommodation. Katie White has returned to Australia having attended Le Cordon Bleu London to become one of the first people in history to obtain their Plant Based Culinary Arts Diploma. To our knowledge, this is Australia's first plant based BnB and cooking school.

#### [Cressence - Crescent Head](#)

New café and licensed bistro offering breakfast, lunch and dinner serving affordable food to suit a variety of tastes.

#### [Miquette - Coffs Harbour](#)

Tucked away in a quiet nook of the Coffs CBD, Miquette is a charming French bistro carefully crafted to transport patrons to a place of relaxation. Paris-café vibes by day, Miquette extends its charm into the late hours, staying open until 8 pm on Thursday and Friday evenings and until midnight Saturday, where friends gather to savour a plate of cheese and charcuterie paired with exceptional natural wines.

#### [The Riverside Farm Escape - Minimbah](#)

The Riverside Farm Escape is a family owned cattle farm situated on the Wang Wauk River in Minimbah on the Mid North Coast of NSW.

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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](#).

#### [Coffs Coast Summer Beach Hop](#)

16-17 March 2024  
Coffs Harbour

#### [Kingscliff Triathlon](#)

23-24 March 2024  
Kingscliff

#### [Maclean Highland Gathering](#)

20-30 March 2024  
Maclean

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## Stay Up To Date And Follow DNC On Social Media

Thank you for taking the time to read this update. Don't forget between our e-newsletters, you'll find us on the socials - head over to follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#). We also encourage you to share our updates with your networks, simply forward this email and they can [register here](#).