



## North Coast News & Views Issue 188

### Casino To Bentley Northern Rivers Rail Trail Opens

Richmond Valley Council celebrated the opening of the [Casino to Bentley section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail](#) last weekend with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Old Casino Station. Spanning 13.4km and providing an adjoining bridle trail for horse riding, the Casino to Bentley section offers opportunities for individuals and families to explore the region's natural beauty.

Richmond Valley Council Mayor Robert Mustow said the new rail trail would attract millions of dollars in annual visitor spend to the region.



### Destination North Coast Visit Lord Howe Island

The DNC team and Board recently returned from a business trip to Lord Howe Island where we had very constructive meetings with the Lord Howe Island Board, the Lord Howe Island Tourism Association and held our own bi-monthly Board Meeting. We hosted an informative industry knowledge sharing session to delve into the particular opportunities and challenges of being a tourism business on the Island and gained amazing insight and information in this session and the many other stakeholder meetings and site inspections held.

[Lord Howe Island](#) is a truly special destination.



## New Destination NSW Corporate Website

Destination NSW has launched a new corporate website that provides a dynamic digital hub for visitor economy stakeholders seeking the latest research, information, tools and resources to support their growth.

The state-of-the-art platform hosts data and insights on visitors and markets; together with training, resources and other business support via the NSW First Program. It also features a newsroom with media releases and updates; plus information on major event investment, industry and business events; and the latest marketing campaigns and partner toolkits.

[Visit the new site here.](#)

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## Australian Tourism Awards 2023 - North Coast Winners

The QANTAS Australian Tourism Awards 2023 were held in Darwin last week with the North Coast super well represented across 10 categories. Love Lord Howe brought home GOLD in the **Excellence in Food Tourism** category and Tweed Tourism Company received the GOLD award for **Destination Marketing & Campaigns!** Huge congratulations on this national recognition for all that you do. Congratulations also to Potager - A Kitchen Garden for scooping the SILVER for the **Restaurants & Catering Services** category, Ballons Aloft Australia including Byron Bay awarded BRONZE in the **Adventure Tourism** category and to all our North Coast finalists!



## New Look Reflections Holidays

Last week Reflections launched their fresh new brand, Reflections Holidays.

As they reflect on having grown up a bit since they first started operating 10 years ago and are now offering many ways to get Aussies outside from holiday parks and wilderness camps to luxury glamping, seaside cottages and lighthouse quarters. This new brand is indicative that they are more an outdoor experience company than anything else these days and they're on a mission to reimagine camping in Australia.

[Find out more about the Reflections Holidays journey.](#)



## 24-Hour Economy Update

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner has given a sector briefing on its goals and priorities for 2024. The 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Michael Rodrigues provided updates on further Vibrancy Reforms work and progress, the Uptown Program, Purple Flag initiative and plans for a [24-hour Economy Strategy refresh](#).

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## Splendour In The Grass Cancelled

The annual festival at the North Byron Parklands has pulled the plug on its 2024 edition a mere two weeks after the official line-up was announced.

## Industry Insights

### Tourism Research Australia December 2023 Snapshots

Tourism Research Australia have also released the [NVS snapshot](#) and [IVS snapshot](#) for the month of December 2023. TRA also advise that from January 2024, they will return to publishing NVS and IVS data on a quarterly basis only, with the data for December 2023 being the final monthly release.

Business events are important contributors to Australia's visitor economy. The TRA team now publishes [business events data](#) in an online dashboard as part of the official statistics.

### Easter Travel Spending Prediction

According to research by the Australian Retailers Association, in collaboration with Roy Morgan, holidaymakers are set to spend more than \$9.6 billion on Easter travel this year. Among Australians going away this Easter, 53% will travel within their own state, spending \$2.3 million (down \$500 million or 17%) and 34% will go interstate, spending \$3.5 million (down \$100 million or 2.8%). [Find more information here.](#)

## Around The Region

### Tasman Holiday Parks - North Star

Tasman Holiday Parks has announced the acquisition of North Star Holiday Resort in Hastings Point, NSW. This significant addition to its portfolio underscores the company's commitment to continuing the legacy of the resort's founders and will build on a four-decade legacy of tourism quality.



[Find more information.](#)

### Kempsey Home To Australia's Best Steet Art Laneway

A once-dull unobtrusive laneway in the Kempsey CBD has been named as the best street art laneway experience in Australia. 'Savages Lane on the Macleay Valley Coast', a collection of vibrant murals, was announced as the 'Best Street Art Laneway' for 2023 at the Australian Street Art Awards held recently.

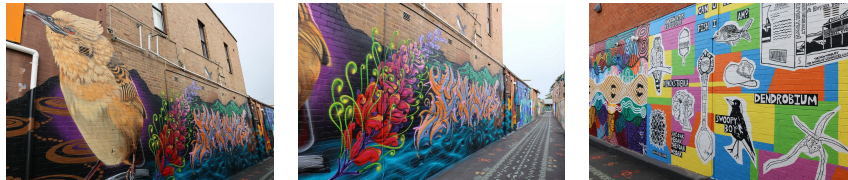
"The transformation of this industrial laneway into a meaningful art space has lifted public pride, and we love how that has very obviously instilled a cultural awakening in the whole town", the judges said.

Also bringing home GOLD for Best Landmark Sculpture was The Big Koala, Spirit of All Koalas, Greater Port Macquarie NSW (Artists: by Pauline Roods and John Belfield).

SILVER was awarded for Best Monument or Memorial to 2022 Flood Memorial Murals, Clarence Valley NSW (Artists: Al Stark and NITSUA) and for Best Sculpture Park or Trail to Hello Koalas Sculpture Trail, Greater Port Macquarie (Artists: numerous).

Congratulations to our North Coast Australian Street Art Awards winners and placegetters.

[Find the full Awards list here.](#)



### Street Art Awards Most Outstanding Contribution To Art Tourism Award

This discretionary honour is awarded to a person who has been the often silent driving force behind transforming their destination through public art.

It is being granted for only the third time and this year's recipient is **Margret Meagher**, initiator of the [Hello Koala Sculpture Trail](#). Since 2000 Margret has been a leader in the international field of arts, health and creative ageing, founding 'Arts and Health Australia' to promote the positive impacts on health and wellbeing for individuals and communities through creative engagement. In 2010 she embarked on developing a public art project in Greater Port Macquarie now known as the Hello Koalas Sculpture Trail. Four years later it launched with 50 one-metre-high fibreglass sculptures hand-painted by artists. These days it encompasses 88 sculptures and is the region's most popular tourism attraction.



### Iconic Byron Bay Locations Have Dual Aboriginal Name Added

Two well-known locations in the Byron Bay area now have Aboriginal dual names, following requests from local communities and in a nod to the cultural significance of these sites. The NSW Geographical Names Board has approved the submission from the National Parks and Wildlife Service to officially dual-name Cape Byron as Walgun and Julian Rocks as Nguthungulli, while a reserve in the suburb of Bangalow has been named Piccabeen Park. [Read media release.](#)

### Tweed Tourism Industry Networking Event

Tweed Tourism Co. invite industry stakeholders to get together to celebrate the region's wins! This networking opportunity will focus on strategic partnerships, working in collaboration and strengthening

community relationships plus celebrate award winners from the recent Australian Tourism Awards!

5.30PM - 7.30PM, Wednesday 10 April 2024  
Husk Farm Distillery | Tickets \$25 per person

[RSVP: Tickets now available](#), with final numbers required by 5 April unless sold out prior.

### Converge In Lismore

In partnership with the NSW Reconstruction Authority, Lismore City Council is proud to unveil the innovative Converge program, a fresh and ambitious initiative to infuse Lismore's CBD with creative vitality. Local artists, musicians, performers and creatives are invited to submit their expression of interest to for a unique opportunity to utilise dedicated working spaces for creating and developing projects in the heart of Lismore.

As a disaster recovery initiative, Converge is designed to bring new life and energy to Lismore's CBD and is an important step forward in Council's commitment to supporting the arts and encouraging economic development within our vibrant community. Successful applicants will enjoy a series of professional development and entrepreneurial supports, community interaction, plus engagement and opportunities to exhibit artworks and present directly to the public. [Expressions of interest for Converge](#) are due by the end of business on Monday, 15 April 2024.



### Clarence Valley Council Event Grants

Round one of the [Special Event Sponsorship](#) is now open for events occurring between August 2024 and January 2025.

Applications are also now open for [sporting events](#) held between July 2024 and June 2025 and occurring in the Clarence Valley region.

### MidCoast Destination Management Plan (DMP 2030)

The new MidCoast Destination Management Plan (DMP 2030) was adopted by Council on 20th March. This document sets the direction for the sustainable growth of the region's visitor economy to 2030 and beyond.

The [DMP 2030](#) works to position the Barrington Coast as a top nature-based sustainable destination, while focusing on supporting our industry operators and enhancing visitor experience offerings.

### Agritourism Free Workshop

MidCoast Council invites all agritourism businesses and farmers to attend a hands-on learning and networking opportunity at Coomba Park. Learn how to navigate the agritourism journey to maximise the opportunities for your business.

11am - 1pm, Tuesday 30 April 2024, The Moorings Lakehouse, Coomba Park

### Seal Pup Born At Coffs Wildlife Sanctuary

Coffs Coast Wildlife Sanctuary is celebrating International Day of the Seal with the announcement that a male seal pup has been born as part of its endangered species management program. Arriving in early February, the yet-to-be-named seal pup marks a significant milestone for the facility's commitment to the preservation of marine life, particularly the endangered Australian Sea Lion.

[Find more here.](#)



### Lawrence Loves... Live Music, Lantern Making And Local Food

Lawrence Community Fundraising Inc. has announced the music and workshops line up for Lawrence Loves... a free community arts festival planned for Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May. There will be plenty of activities to occupy families and children, with the highlight of the event likely to be the lantern parade at 6pm, with activities and performances kicking off at 2pm and finishing up around 9pm. [Find more information here.](#)

### Wildskin

Get ready for a wild ride of immersive storytelling, physical theatre, laughter and song when **Wildskin** takes over the Lismore Showgrounds in September. From the team behind *Love For One Night*, **Wildskin** is another not-to-be-missed, sensory-smashing, destination theatre experience. Performed inside an industrial warehouse, **Wildskin** takes you on a dark, outrageous, and unpredictable journey that's part bush-thriller, part road-trip narrative and a whole lot of NORPA's signature theatrical style. [Find more information here.](#)

### Conde Nast Traveler Reveals Best Beaches

Every year *Conde Nast Traveler* ranks the best beaches from around the world and Wategos Beach at Byron Bay came fourth on the list. The magazine said "while any stretch of Byron's coastline is pretty, the ultimate spot is Wategos Beach". [Find more information here.](#)

### NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Update

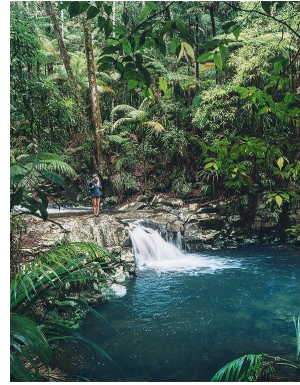
The Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage, the Hon Penny Sharpe MLC, has adopted a plan of management for [Goolawah National Park, Goolawah Regional Park and Limeburners Creek National Park](#) under the *National Parks and*

This plan sets long term objectives for the management of these important parks and authorises operations and activities necessary to achieve these objectives.

### **Lismore City Council Adopts Plan To Drive Tourism**

The Lismore Destination Management Plan (DMP), officially adopted by Council last week, underscores the city's commitment to harnessing its cultural, economic, and social potential through tourism. The Lismore DMP aims to maximise the benefits of tourism for the region, safeguarding and enhancing its natural and cultural assets for the local communities and businesses of Lismore, Nimbin and Villages.

It also aligns seamlessly with broader strategic frameworks such as the North Coast NSW DMP 2030 and the state's Visitor Economy Strategy 2030, underscoring its integral role in driving regional development. [Read the DMP here.](#)



## Industry Development And Other Opportunities



# NORTH COAST TOURISM AWARDS

### **ENTER - 2024 North Coast Tourism Awards!**

Destination North Coast, in collaboration with Business NSW, recently announced the return of the North Coast Tourism Awards which are designed to honour growth, innovation, and excellence within the tourism sector across the whole of the North Coast.

Participating in these respected awards offers a valuable opportunity for businesses to reflect on their achievements, strategies, and future visions, fostering growth and sustainability within the industry.

[Find more information and submit your entry here.](#)

**Entries close 3 May 2024.**

An Entrant Information Session was held earlier this week, providing tips and tricks to developing a great submission. [A copy of the recording can be found here.](#)

### **Regional Events Accelerator Program**

Destination North Coast NSW is partnering with Australian Centre for Regional Events (previously rEVENTS Academy) to upskill the region's event and festival organisers with the aim of ensuring event competitiveness and long-term sustainability throughout the region.

Australian Centre for Regional Events have designed a bespoke 10-week program that combines online e-learning, live group sessions for networking and collaboration, and one-on-one check-ins with an event specialist. [Find more information and complete the EOI here.](#)

### **Join The Business Events NSW Showcase**

The showcase will be held in Sydney on 15 May 2024 and aims to generate business event leads for visitor economy stakeholders in regional NSW.

Partnering with Destination NSW at the showcase event will provide an exclusive opportunity to generate business event leads and raise buyer consideration for products, services or regions.

All opportunities have limited availability and require an EOI submission by Monday 8 April 2024.

Find [more information and Expression of Interest online forms here.](#) Or enquire with DNC's [Business Events Executives.](#)

### **DNSW Looking For Your News**

Destination NSW is seeking news from visitor economy stakeholders to help spread the word about the many reasons to visit NSW. They want to hear about the new experiences your business, organisation or destination is offering - anything from nature-based activities to luxury stays, seasonal attractions, foodie finds or local favourites. The information will be used by the PR team to create media pitches, produce content on the Destination NSW Media Centre and support media planning. [Find more information here.](#)

### **THRIVE 2030 Action Plan For Phase 2: Consolidation Phase (2025-2027)**

With the first phase (Recovery) of Australia's national strategy for the Visitor Economy, THRIVE 2030, coming to a close, it's time to help Austrade develop the second phase (Consolidation) for 2025-2027. [You can participate in different ways](#), from completing a simple survey to attending consultation meetings.

### **Tourism Emissions Reduction Program Launched**

The Hon Don Farrell, Minister for Tourism and Trade and the Australian Tourism Industry Council, [launched](#) the Tourism Emissions Reduction program at the inaugural Talking Tourism Business Forum in Darwin recently.

The online program provides businesses with an emissions estimate and a tailored reduction plan. Businesses can then demonstrate their commitment to enacting waste and emissions reductions measures to visitors via a unique link and QR code. The Australian Government has provided \$8 Million in funding to support the Australian Tourism Industry Council's suite of online programs including this

[Tourism Emissions Reduction, Accessible Tourism](#) and [Sustainable Tourism Accreditation](#) programs. The funding is designed to assist small, medium, and regional tourism businesses enhance their quality, accessibility, and sustainability.

#### **Tourism Product Listing Optimisation - ATDW**

Tourism business operators registered with the [Australian Tourism Data Warehouse \(ATDW\)](#) can book a free one-on-one optimisation session with ATDW's Success Team to unlock the full potential of their ATDW profile. The team will provide recommendations tailored to your business, helping you gain maximum visibility and engagement for your product profile across ATDW's distribution network, which includes websites such as [visitnsw.com](#). [Find out more here.](#)

#### **Working With Tourism Australia**

Tourism Australia has released an updated version of its 'Working With Tourism Australia' guide. With the return of international visitors, they continue to adapt and embrace opportunities as they arise to stimulate travel to and through Australia. In doing so, Tourism Australia has updated many of its existing resources and developed some new resources that are available to help your business.

[Find out more and download the guide here](#)



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## 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](#).

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

Events and experiences across the state will be supercharged this year with the NSW Government providing \$1.5 million through the Regional Event Fund for regional events held in the 2024/25 financial year. Please reach out to DNC if you require assistance with your application although be aware that for this funding round, Letters of Support from DNC are not required. **Closes 9 April 2024.**

#### **[Electric Vehicle Destination Charging Grants](#)**

The NSW Government is investing \$20 million to assist eligible regional NSW businesses and councils by co-funding the purchase and installation of EV chargers at their site. **Closes 3 May 2024.**

#### **[Community Giving Project](#)**

Supports initiatives that provide sustainable, tangible and long-term benefits with positive outcomes for Australian rural, regional and remote communities. **Closes 10 May 2024.**

#### **[Small Projects Grants \(quick response\) - Individuals and Groups 2023/24](#)**

These grants support professional development opportunities for NSW-based professional artists, groups and arts and cultural workers (including museum workers). **Closes 20 May 2024.**

#### **[Touring and Travel Fund](#)**

Designed to address the time-sensitive nature of venue availability and performance opportunities, Sound NSW's \$2 million Touring and Travel Fund offers quick response grants of up to \$2,500 per person for domestic activity and up to \$7,500 per person for international activity. Applications for Sound NSW's Touring and Travel Fund will be assessed on a quick-response basis against eligibility criteria. **Closes 20 May 2024.**

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## North Coast Product Development

#### **[Spotted Pig - Lismore](#)**

New deli featuring lots of local products and produce.

#### **[The Mad Shuckers at Brighton Oysters - Mitchells Island](#)**

Three different oyster tours (1.5 hrs, 2 hour and 3 hour) in the Manning River offering an immersive experience to connect with the local environment, culture and taste fresh oyster from their source. There's also [The Oyster Overnighter](#) accommodation (3 bedrooms) and Brighton's 1 Bedroom Villa for those wanting to make an extended trip.

#### **[Culture Wine and Liquor - Lennox Head](#)**

A boutique bottle shop showcasing artisan producers from Australia and around the World specialising in wines crafted with minimal intervention and with strong ethos surrounding sustainability. Also offering Craft Beer and Small batch spirits and a range of snacks, homewares and gifts.

#### **[Cheetah Five Shop & Café - Crescent Head](#)**

Trendy retail store with surf vibes now also serving coffee.

#### **[The Mainstay - Bungwahl](#)**

A fully self-contained coastal farmstay just 10 minutes to Seal Rocks Beach. One Farmhouse and three cabins.

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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](#).

#### **[Australian Women's Golf Classic](#)**

Bonville

4-7 April 2024

**[Omnia Exhibition](#)**

Tweed Regional Gallery, Murwillumbah  
Opens 6 April 2024

**[Cinema Under The Stars](#)**

Lismore  
19 April 2024

**[Youth Laneway Festival](#)**

Kempsey  
22 April 2024

**[Casino Cow Country Music Muster](#)**

Casino  
29 April - 4 May 2024

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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](#).

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