



North Coast News & Views Issue 191

2024 North Coast Tourism Symposium - 1 August 2024

Destination North Coast is delighted to be collaborating with destination co-host, Port Macquarie Hastings Council to deliver this year's annual [North Coast Tourism Symposium](#).

The theme of this year's Symposium is **Creating World Class Experiences**.

The **2024 North Coast Tourism Awards** (and festive gala event) will follow on from the Symposium and presents a highly anticipated opportunity for celebrating and rewarding success.

Submissions to the Awards Program have now closed. Judging has commenced and finalists across 17 categories will be announced on Thursday 6 June 2024.

The Award Ceremony and Gala Dinner to be held at [Sails Port Macquarie by Rydges](#) on the evening of **1 August 2024**. With Jane Goldsmith, the esteemed presenter and star of NBN News, serving as the Master of Ceremonies, and an evening filled with celebration and recognition, the event promises to be an unforgettable affair.



\$1.4 Million Program To Boost Visitor Economy Workforce In Regional NSW

A \$1.4 million campaign to encourage young people, First Nations Australians, seniors and people living with a disability to pursue a career in tourism is being rolled out across regional NSW.

Funded by the Australian Government and delivered by Destination NSW, the [NSW Choose Tourism Program](#) will address industry workforce shortages by encouraging Australians to pursue a career in the visitor economy while helping operators to attract, retain and upskill staff.

The NSW Centre of Excellence is presenting a series of full-day [professional development sessions](#) in May and June 2024 as part of the NSW Choose Tourism Program. The North Coast event will be held in Byron Bay on 26 June 2024.

The Choose Tourism NSW Program is offering a [Mentor Program](#) that aims to assist workers in the tourism and hospitality industry in regional NSW, by matching them with industry leaders who will provide coaching, support, advice, motivation and exposure. The Mentor Program is open to those working in tourism and/or hospitality in regional NSW. Applications close 17 May 2024.

NSW Choose Tourism will present a webinar on **23 May 2024** that will explore how visitor economy stakeholders can future-proof their businesses. [Register here](#).

The Choose Tourism NSW program wants to hear from you. They want to learn more about the challenges operators in regional NSW are facing, when it comes to shortages in labour and skills. [Complete the survey here](#).

Top Tourism Towns - Vote For Your Favourite Finalist

The Top Tourism Town Awards showcase the value of tourism to the towns and communities across NSW and celebrate the diversity and outstanding regional destinations of our State. Congratulations to all of our 2024 Finalists from the North Coast.

Small Tourism Town (between 1,500-5,000

residents)

- Buladelah
- Gloucester
- Ulmarra

Top Tourism Town (over 5,00 residents)

- Ballina
- Grafton
- Murwillumbah

[Vote for your favourite town.](#) Voting closes 13 May 2024.



DNC BE Program Shines At MEA NSW/ACT Awards

This week Destination North Coast, Business Events Executive Kerry Bryant was thrilled to attend the NSW Meetings & Events Australia (MEA) Awards ceremony held in Sydney.

DNC's Business Events Program was celebrated with a WIN bringing home the *Destination Marketing Business Award*. This is the third time that the program has won the award from three attempts across the programs five-year existence. Being results focused the award recognises the great work that the program delivers but also the collective achievements from the Business Events community of the North Coast.

As we like to state, 'we achieve much more together' and this award reaffirms that statement and the strength of the program. As the Business Events sector has returned with great momentum, we look forward to working with more of you and continuing to deliver value to our partners in the years ahead.



THRIVE 2030 Action Plan Review

Have your say on THRIVE 2030, the national strategy for Australia's visitor economy recovery and return to sustainable growth, 2022 - 2030. The online survey allows you to share your thoughts on THRIVE 2030 implementation and what your challenges and priorities are for the future. [Complete the survey.](#)

DNC In Region

Destination North Coast was pleased to support MidCoast Council's Agritourism Workshops held in Hannam Vale and Coomba Park last week. It was exciting to hear from farmers in the ideation phase, thinking of ways to develop a farm experience and diversify their income, and others who are already active in the agritourism space. We look forward to supporting these stakeholders as they develop their product and experiences to welcome visitors to their farms.



NSW Tourism Awards

The NSW Tourism Awards, is the pinnacle awards program for the New South Wales visitor economy.

The awards, presented by NSW Tourism Association, recognise and celebrate the outstanding achievements of the state's tourism industry, and forms part of the prestigious Australian Tourism Awards.

Open to all tourism businesses within New South Wales, categories range for tourist attractions, tour and transport, festivals and events, food, wine, accommodation and more.

Nominations are due by 30 June 2024 and submissions due 6 September. Finalists will be announced on 24 October. Winners of the Awards will be announced at a Gala Ceremony in late November.

[Find more information here.](#)



Creative Australia Release New Report Into The Festivals Sector

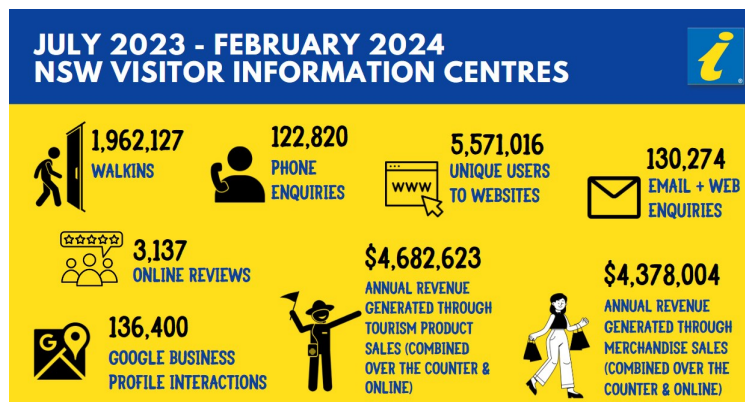
Soundcheck provides a benchmark for measuring and understanding Australia's music festival industry - now and into the future. This is a comprehensive overview of the scope and scale of Australia's music festival industry and the [report can be read here along with summarised key findings](#).

Wellness Travel Trends to Watch in 2024

Roadbook has released their [wellness travel trends to watch in 2024](#) from biohacking to bespoke luxury fitness.

AVIC Latest Statistics

The latest statistics for Visitor Centres in NSW have been released - see the infographic provided by The Tourism Group below.



Tourism Businesses In Australia 2018 - 2023

Tourism Research Australia's [tourism businesses in Australia 2018 to 2023](#) report is now available. There were 355,570 tourism businesses operational nationwide at 30 June 2023, a decline of 1.5% or 5,262 businesses from June 2022. The number of tourism businesses grew by 13% between June 2018 and June 2023.

Cost-of-Living Pressures Increase

The latest NAB Consumer Sentiment Survey shows that more consumers have responded to cost-of-living pressures by cutting back on spending during the March quarter. Eating out at restaurants was the most common area for cutbacks (57% versus 54% in the last quarter), micro treats such as coffee and snacks (52% versus 50%), entertainment (49% versus 47%), car journeys to save petrol (46% versus 45%) and holiday plans (45% versus 43%). With the number of consumers making cutbacks continuing to rise, the biggest savings are coming from spending less on major household appliances (\$554 up from \$430 in the previous quarter) and holidays (\$528 versus \$409). [Find more information here](#).

Around The Region

DNC Kempsey Shire Board Meeting & Industry Networking

The Destination North Coast Board traditionally rotates around the region for our bi-monthly Board meetings. In May, we have pleasure in planning our meeting to be held at Crescent Head.

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.

- What: Evening Industry Networking
- When: Wednesday, 15 May 2024
- Time: 5.15pm-6.45pm
- Where: The Mini Golf Gazebo, [Crescent Head Country Club](#), 1 Rankine St, Crescent Head

[RSVP is required by 10 May 2024](#) and for catering purposes, please include any dietary restrictions.

We look forward to connecting with industry in region and meeting in Crescent Head.

Clarence Valley Destination Management Plan on Public Exhibition

The Clarence Valley Destination Management Plan outlines a vision and strategic framework to guide the sustainable development of tourism in the region over the next seven years. Community feedback has contributed to the creation of the plan following an online survey and drop-in sessions to engage community members in person. This feedback has highlighted widespread support for tourism in the Clarence Valley. Priorities identified include enhancing nature-based attractions, developing First Nations and cultural experience as well as promotion to increase yields and visitor spending.

The Clarence Valley Destination Management Plan is on exhibition on the [Clarence Valley Council website](#) until **Friday, 24 May**. It's not too late to make a submission.

NSW Koala Hospital Alliance.

The three organisations running the largest koala hospitals in NSW; Koala Conservation Australia Port Macquarie, Friends of the Koala Lismore and Port Stephens Koala Hospital have announced the formation of the NSW Koala Hospital Alliance. The Alliance aims to achieve better outcomes in koala conservation by working together, sharing information and resources, and strengthening these organisations, already leaders in koala care, through collaboration in koala care, science, education, and research. [Read media release](#).



Laboratory Of Light

By popular demand NORPA is making its original school production, [Laboratory of Light](#), open to families, for one night only.

Welcome to the curious and wonder-filled world of Luminous - a backyard scientist and inventor never wants to be in the dark again, so is on a mission to understand and capture light. Luminous spends all night conducting experiments in the Laboratory of Light in the hope that one day this will lead to recognition and fame. Darkness is lonely and needs a friend but Luminous is afraid of the dark! **6 June 2024 - Star Court Theatre, Lismore.**

MidCoast Destination Management Plan 2030

MidCoast Council have updated their Destination Management Plan to guide the development of the Barrington Coast tourist region into the future. The plan aims to set the direction and priorities to sustainably grow our visitor economy to 2030 and beyond.

The plan focuses on sustainable growth, with people spending more money, staying longer, and exploring the region all year round, while also protecting the environment, culture, and community.

Importantly, it's a plan for the whole region, not just individual businesses or operators. [Find out more here.](#)



Wildlife Tourism Australia Conference

[Earlybird registration](#) is now open for [Wildlife Tourism Australia's 2024 conference](#), *Wild Tails: the value of quality story-telling and other interpretation in wildlife tourism*, 5-7 November at Hastings Point on the Far North Coast of NSW, as well as online. This event will involve three days of presentations, round-table discussions and field trips, and aims to bring together tour guides, academic researchers, students, conservation managers, ecolodge staff, zoo-keepers, natural history NGOs and anyone else with an interest in ecotourism, from Australia and around the world.

Northern Rivers Rail Trail Earns Prestigious Engineering Excellence Award

The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) recently awarded the Tweed section of the [Northern Rivers Rail Trail](#) top honours for Engineering Excellence in Category 1C - Design and Construction of a Public Works Project - Project greater than \$5 million. The award is further testament to the success of the Tweed section of the Rail Trail, which has attracted more than 140,000 guests since opening on 1 March 2023. Other award wins for the Northern Rivers Rail Trail to date include the best regional project in NSW by the Australian Institute of Project Management (2023) as well as achieving first place in the 29th annual National Trust Heritage Awards in the category of Conservation - Landscape (2023).

Macleay Valley Coast Digital Bootcamp

An exciting opportunity is available for ten tourism and hospitality businesses in the Macleay Valley. The Macleay Valley Coast has teamed up with Julie Humphris to host a six-week digital bootcamp to help inform and strengthen digital skills and the importance of growing your business in this area. The Bootcamp will consist of six, two-hour workshops, [commencing Monday, 17 June.](#)

Saltwater Freshwater Festival

The Saltwater Freshwater Festival is an annual family friendly event showcasing Aboriginal art and culture. The Festival's mission is to celebrate and share authentic Aboriginal living culture with the wider community and create a positive, inclusive family day for all communities to enjoy.

The event is held at various locations each year across the Mid North Coast, with this year's event located on Dughutti Country at Smittown Riverside Park, Kempsey Shire on **Saturday, 1 June 2024.** [Find more information here.](#)

ArtWalk

It's only 5 weeks until Port Macquarie's signature arts event. On Friday 7 June, [ArtWalk](#) shines the light on Port Macquarie's CBD, with performing artists, light and projection installations, a youth precinct, drag queens, buskers, bands and an octopus take-over! It's a fantastic family event and there'll be free buses on the night to make your travel easier. ArtWalk brings artists and creatives together with local business, showcasing stellar local talent.



Industry Development And Other Opportunities

Tourism Australia's May Industry Webinar

Tourism Australia's May Hotlist Released

Tourism Australia has released its latest travel '[Hot List' for May 2024](#). The guide includes the latest news and tourism offerings across the country and is updated monthly. This edition includes Kiff & Culture's [Dreamtime Art Trail](#) in the Tweed and [28 Degrees](#), new guesthouse on the block in Byron Bay.

Free Australian Government Resources To Help Recruit Tourism Staff.

Free Australian Government resources are available to help tourism businesses suffering workforce shortages recruit employees. Employing people under-represented in the workforce - such as people with disability or older and younger Australians - could meet labour needs while helping to build a secure, resilient workforce - a priority of THRIVE 2030, Australia's visitor economy national strategy. Free resources are available to help industry recruit people from under-represented groups such as:

- [People with disability](#)
- [Older Australians](#)
- [Younger Australians](#)

New Hospitality Concierge

The Hospitality Concierge is a new 'one stop shop' for hospitality businesses to find out more about the new liquor licence reforms and to help your business benefit from new initiatives that reduce red tape and support the 24-hour economy. The concierge provides personalised guidance on a range of government support including outdoor dining, approvals, initiatives, incentives, and more. [Find more information here.](#)

Funding And Other Opportunities

[Museums and Galleries of NSW Audience Development Fund](#)

This program aims to offer public galleries in NSW assistance towards targeting and developing new audiences for the visual arts. **Closes 20 June 2024.**

[Small Business Skills & 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.**

[NSW Aboriginal Land Council - LALC Business Enterprise Program](#)

This program aims to develop local economic and business opportunities through the provision of tailored business support and funding. **Ongoing.**

Visitor Economy Stakeholder In Focus

In this edition, we are pleased to focus on Peter Berecny, the Port Tree Fella!

By all accounts Pete is an all-round fabulously nice guy who gives time and energy in the Port Macquarie Hastings region supporting projects close to his heart particularly in the natural environment.

With a background in Landscaping, Horticulture & Arboriculture he contributes significantly to numerous community groups. Involvements include tree management, donations of mulch, large scale bushfire and wildlife recovery, working with local schools and volunteer groups and supporting Port United Soccer Club. Of particular note are his commitments to:

- Port Macquarie Landcare
- Port Macquarie Koala Hospital (PMKH) & Koala Conservation Australia (KCA)
- Friends of Mrs York's Garden

In 2023 he was nominated for and won the Port Macquarie Australia Day Environmental Citizen of the Year Award. It's local heroes like Pete who many may not consider a visitor economy stakeholder, but who help behind the scenes to keep places like The Port Macquarie Koala Hospital and Mrs Yorks Garden thriving and who are helping bring the vision of Gulabaa to life.

[Find more about Pete and his achievements here.](#)



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.](#)

[Casino Beef Week](#)

Casino
20-26 May 2024

[TriNSW Club Championship](#)

Forster Tuncurry

25 May 2024

[All One Under The Sun Festival](#)

Coffs Harbour

26 May 2024



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