



Destination North Coast NSW

North Coast Tourism Symposium 2024 - It's A Wrap



Watch the North Coast Tourism Symposium highlights reel!

The 2024 North Coast Tourism Symposium and Tourism Awards were great successes with both breaking attendance records and showcasing the amazing talent on offer from across our region and the wider industry. Held in Port Macquarie, the events also highlighted the first-class facilities on offer with the Tourism Symposium delivered at [Glasshouse](#), and the Tourism Awards held at [Sails Port Macquarie By Rydges](#).

The Tourism Symposium's theme ***Creating World Class Experiences*** brought forward a jam-packed program spearheaded by an engaging opening session, In Conversation with [Darrell Wade, Co-Founder and Chair of Intrepid Travel](#). When asked what the secret ingredient is to creating world class experiences, Darrell said it's all about the hardware being your physical product and importantly, the software, your people. It's about having a culture that inspires your people to insert magic moments into the experience they deliver. It's also about creating a connection and encouraging visitors to explore and experience things in their own way as they create personal memories. Culture will help you stand out in a cluttered market with connection with community and developing other partnerships also key.

[Nick Baker, CEO Reflections Holidays](#) reiterated many of these themes speaking of the magic moments brought to life camping at a Reflections Park. This could be as simple as roasting marshmallows over a fire pit or engaging with a First Nation's community member as they explain about bush tucker or their connection to Country in special school holiday programs.

The morning got creative with [Libby Lincoln, Executive Director, Northern Rivers Performing Arts \(NORPA\)](#) who beautifully articulated the intersection between the arts and creative industries and tourism and the visitor economy. Some interesting case studies brought this concept to life.

[Ian Hutton](#), photographer, researcher, naturalist, museum curator and tour operator, along with [Timmy Maxwell, owner of Island House](#) and co-creator of Lord Howe Island Brewery, regaled with tales of endemic species, world-heritage geography and landscapes, connected and deep experiences and the beauty that is Lord Howe Island.

The last session of the morning was an interactive panel session with Darrell, Nick and Libby participating along with [Ann Walton from National Parks & Wildlife Service, North Coast Branch](#). Ann shared information and updates on the development of a world class visitor experience in the creation of the new Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre and Great Escarpment Walk and how these developments are in response to

changing consumer demand and visitor expectations. After a rousing 30minute discussion, questions flowed from the audience to extract as many insights and as much information as possible from our industry experts.

Our after-lunch energizer session, delivered by [Peta and Belinda of Positive Energy Life](#) got the blood flowing and everyone up and engaged with (dare I say it) dancing and doing stretching exercises that helped the afternoon sessions fly on by.

As has been the pattern of previous Tourism Symposiums, we were pleased to deliver updates across all levels of government. Continuing the theme, industry updates and marketing campaign learnings were delivered by [Destination North Coast](#), [Destination NSW](#) and [Tourism Australia](#).

Duncan Coulton, Executive Manager Strategy, [Port Macquarie Hastings Council](#), brought home the North Coast Tourism Symposium with a thoughtful summary of the day, concluding with expressed thanks to everyone for visiting the Port Macquarie Hastings region and for attending our events.

We are extremely grateful for the generous contribution of many giveaways and door prizes. We gave away two bottles of gin from [Lord Howe Island Distilling Co](#), five ['The Stranded Chef'](#) cookbooks by author and chef Dennis Tierney and two [Port Macquarie Monopoly](#) games donated by Port Macquarie Hastings Council. We are most grateful to the many amazing Lord Howe Island industry stakeholders, along with [Eastern Air Services](#) and [Rydges Port Macquarie](#) who contributed to our major door prize, a trip for two to Lord Howe Island including a total of eight nights' accommodation at [Somerset](#) and [Admiralty Apartments](#) and an abundance of world class tourism experiences to be delivered by [Dive Lord Howe](#): A Galapagos Shark Snorkel Experience; [Sea to Summit Expeditions](#): A Mount Gower guided tour; [Reef N Beyond](#): A trip to Ball's Pyramid/Island Expedition; [Marine Adventures](#): A Glassbottom boat North Bay Turtle Nature and Snorkelling Tour; [Liv for the Sea](#): An Introductory Freedive Experience; [Coral Cafe](#): Dinner for 2 to the total value of \$200; [Lord Howe Island Distilling Co](#): Island Gin Tasting Experience and [Lord Howe Island Museum](#): Informative Island History Lecture.

[See full prize and trip details here.](#)





North Coast Tourism Awards

The North Coast Tourism Awards received 87 entrants demonstrating the value that our industry places on the awards and coming together to collectively celebrate our achievements.

Congratulations to all the winners and special congratulations to Potager, who took home gold in the Excellence in Food Tourism category as well as Business of the Year. [A full list of winners can be found here.](#)



Post-Event Surveys

In an endeavour to continue to deliver quality events, we ask everyone who attended the North Coast Tourism Symposium and/or the North Coast Tourism Awards to please fill in our [Post-Event Survey](#). We seek your feedback so we can source speakers and content for Symposium that resonates with you, our stakeholders and similarly, to know if we are on the right track with our Tourism Awards Program. Thank you!

Destination North Coast endeavoured to implement sustainable practices into our events as we commence our sustainability journey. Working in partnership with [Earthcheck](#) and using their Eventcheck framework, we ask you to support our commitment to continued improvement of our environmental performance in delivering our annual events. For those who attended our events last week, please fill in this quick [Travel Survey](#) (in addition to the above Event Survey) so we can measure the carbon footprint of attendance at our events.

Event Image Gallery

Destination North Coast was pleased have Lucy Humphries Photography, as our event photographer at both the North Coast Tourism Symposium and North Coast Tourism Awards.

[Please see our events' image gallery.](#)

Please credit [Lucy Humphries Photography](#) when publishing any images from our events.



Sincere And Special Thanks

Delivering such amazing events is not possible without collaboration and support.

Our genuine thanks to event co-hosts [Port Macquarie Hastings Council](#) and our Major Sponsor for both events, [Reflections Holidays](#).

And special thanks to our event Tourism Symposium Minor Sponsors [Tourism Australia](#), [National Parks & Wildlife Service - North Coast Branch](#), and [Ingenia Holiday Parks](#). We cannot deliver high calibre events without your support and we thank you.

[Business NSW](#) was DNC's delivery partner in producing the Awards program and were tireless in their efforts to ensure a successful program for which we are most thankful.
