



Destination
North Coast NSW

Visitor Economy News



We Are The Australian Tourism Industry Initiative

Tourism Australia have launched [We are the Australian tourism industry](#), a TA led initiative, where the industry come together to highlight the importance of tourism to Australia's economy and communities across the country.

With tourism approaching a critical period in its ongoing recovery, those on the frontline of the industry have issued a reminder about the value of tourism. The tourism industry is already worth \$170 billion a year, is expected to be worth \$220 billion by 2028, and supports more than 650,000 Australian jobs. International arrivals have returned to 85% of 2019 levels and continue to progress in line with expectations. We always knew recovery would take time and we have experienced that over the past two and a half years since international borders reopened

We are on our way to returning to a path of sustainable growth and it is important we do, not only for tourism, but for the halo effect the industry has on so many other local businesses from food growers and producers, to hospitality and cleaners and so much more.

The first episode of *We are the Australian tourism industry* was launched as registrations opened to Tourism Australia's flagship event, **Destination Australia**, to be held in March 2025. The videos will also feature at upcoming State and National tourism awards around the country.

[Find Out More](#)



Marathon Majors Status Brings \$73 Million To NSW Visitor Economy

The TCS Sydney Marathon has been announced as the seventh Abbott World Marathon Major alongside New York, London, Tokyo, Boston, Chicago and Berlin.

Destination NSW supported TCS Sydney Marathon's three-year candidacy and review period to become a World Major, with its elevated status expected to drive a wave of international and interstate runners to visit NSW.

Becoming a World Marathon Major city will bring an estimated \$73 million in visitor expenditure to the state over the next three years, with many participants taking the opportunity to travel in regional NSW during their visit.

[Find Out More](#)



Guulabaa Wild Koala Breeding Centre Opening Soon

Port Macquarie's Wild Koala Breeding Centre at Guulabaa Place of Koala will open to the public in mid-December. At this world first centre, visitors will see koalas firsthand and understand and learn about the ongoing rejuvenation of the koala species following the 2019-2020 Mid-North Coast fires on surrounding environments. Each visit supports local conservation efforts and contributes to saving this endangered species.

Follow the Wild Koala Breeding Centre Guulabaa story in [this three-part blog series](#) and [watch this video](#) to understand the importance work ahead.

[Find Out More](#)



Agritourism Summit Review

Recently, our colleagues at Destination Central West attended the Agritourism Summit held in the Southern Highlands. The Summit featured the stories, learnings and insights of agritourism operators who have been welcoming visitors to their properties for years.

Key learnings:

1. **Planning** - If possible, do it under the exempt and complying development. If you do need a DA, speak to your council early as it can be a slow process.
2. **Insurance** - Imperative, get a good broker!
3. **Start Small** - It takes time. Test new products and experiences as you go. Then build from there.
4. **Ask questions** - There's an ecosystem to help you in the tourism space. Make the most of the network including your local Council tourism manager, [Destination North Coast](#), [Destination NSW](#), [Tourism Australia](#), other agritourism providers.
5. **Agritourism is a growing sector** - Think beyond on-farm accommodation. Look to deliver on-farm experiences such as farm tours, farm gate/roadside stall, cooking classes, produce tastings, self-picking activities, farm-to-table dining etc.

Primary producers and agribusiness operators interested in exploring agritourism opportunities are encouraged to reach out to [Destination North Coast](#).

Find Out More

Extra Protection For Live Music

Live music venues in NSW will gain extra protection under new measures introduced by the NSW Government. As part of the second tranche of Vibrancy Reforms, the Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy has been empowered to intervene if a significant music venue is at risk of closing its doors. [Find more information here.](#)

Industry Insights



TTF Travel Plans & Habits

Tourism Transport Forum (TTF) has recently conducted a national survey of Australians on their travel plans and habits for September and October. The results offer insights into locations, planned spend and more.

[Find Out More](#)

A Record Year In First Nations Tourism

There were a total 3.0 million trips that incorporated First Nations activities in 2023-24, the highest annual number of trips on record incorporating First Nations activities. [This First Nations tourism report](#) provides insights on international and domestic tourism in Australia involving First Nations activities over the years from 2013-14 to 2023-24.



Data After Dark

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner presents the NSW Night-Time Economy Quarterly Report, a new resource providing valuable insights into the state's evolving night-time economy.

[Find Out More](#)

The Rise Of Foodie Travellers

The [2025 Hilton Trends Report](#) has revealed that dining experiences are the next highest travel budget priority in 2025 after accommodation. Half of global travellers make restaurant reservations before their flights, nearly one in five travel specifically to seek out restaurants or culinary experiences and 60% of luxury travellers favour staying at hotels with great restaurants.

Industry Development And Other Opportunities





2025 Tourism Australia RTO Forum

Register for the 2025 Tourism Australia RTO Forum, Sydney, 18 March 2025, with the option to add your Destination Australia registration at a discounted rate as an add-on to your RTO Forum registration.

[Register Here](#)

Creative's Guide to Marketing

Service NSW will host a [free marketing workshop for the creative industry](#) in the Converge co-working space in Lismore, 4pm to 6pm, Thursday, 21 November 2024. With a focus on arts practice and creative industries, the workshop will cover the reimagining of traditional marketing, foundational elements of YOU marketing, digital marketing and more.



Inclusion Training Program

A short course by The Accessible Group is now available for tourism businesses to confidently welcome guests with disabilities. The course can be delivered in-person or online and tailored to your business.

[Find Out More](#)

Set Your Holiday Hours On Google

The holiday season is rapidly approaching and visitor economy businesses are being advised to ensure any changes to their business hours are added to their Google listing. These updates will ensure visitors can access the most accurate information possible.

[Find more information here.](#)

Around The Region



Recognising Country And Culture With New Dual Names

Two North Coast national parks have officially been renamed to reflect their significance to the Arakwal people and Bundjalung language. Cape Byron State Conservation Area and Julian Rocks Nature Reserve are now known as Walgun Cape Byron State Conservation Area and Nguthungulli Julian Rocks Nature Reserve - Walgun meaning 'shoulder' in Bundjalung language, and Nguthungulli meaning 'father of the world'.

[Find Out More](#)



Crescent Head Holiday Park Wins People's Choice Award.

Crescent Head Holiday Park has claimed the prestigious People's Choice Award in Jayco's 'Greatest Escapes,' a competition that highlights some of Australia's most awe-inspiring but underappreciated destinations. This annual awards program celebrates caravan parks that showcase the natural beauty of Australia and encourages travellers to explore the wonders of the outdoors. Find more information here.

[Find Out More](#)

AHA Names Best Pubs In NSW

Winners were announced during an awards ceremony at Royal Randwick Racecourse in front of a crowd of about 1350 industry, political and business leaders.

Congratulations to:

- Best Live Music Venue - Finnian's Hotel, Port Macquarie
- Disability Inclusion And Access Award - Toormina Hotel, Toormina
- Best Regional Local - Settlers Inn Hotel, Port Macquarie
- Best Innovative Refurbishment - The Heritage Hotel of Gladstone, Gladstone
- Best Steak Sandwich - The Coramba Hotel, Coramba

[See the full list of winners here.](#)

Major Milestone For Coffs Harbour Bypass

The first major phase of the three tunnels to be built as part of the bypass has been completed. The bypass is expected to reduce travel times when it opens to traffic in late 2026. [Learn more here.](#)

Macleay Coast Master Plan Finalised

The Macleay Coast destination project aims to improve community wellbeing, enhance the regional visitor economy and increase nature-based tourism in New South Wales. The project, which includes funding of \$6.7M, will complement the existing historic and cultural significance of key visitor precincts in Arakoon and Hat Head national parks. [Find the plan here.](#)

Reflections Add Glamping At Seal Rocks And Bonny Hills

Glamping for the family just got a whole lot roomier at Seal Rocks! Reflections brand new [Safari Lodge Glamping](#) tents sleeps up to six and are tucked away in lush bushland with gorgeous views of the Pacific Ocean - a dream spot for the whole family.

For a stay the family will never forget, the [Safari Glamping tents](#) at Bonny Hills are the perfect choice. Picture this: private outdoor bath on the balcony, sun shining, separate bunk room for the kids, and a private bathroom - camping on another level! Alternatively, a romantic couples retreat can be had in the [Junior Safari tents](#) with a solid wooden swing on the deck, relaxing ocean views, and a luxurious king-size bed.

Karkalla On Country

Karkalla On Country is an immersive culinary and cultural experience on Bundjalung Country. This 3+ hour immersive event is a celebration of **Moogerahmbu** - Thunderstorm Season. A time when wind moves between northeast and south. Many birds begin hatching, bush turkeys are fat, pigeons and doves abundant. There are plenty of mungul (oysters), yugari (pipi), jubi (crab) and Mulañ (prawns). Flathead begin to come into season. December 14 & 15 2024. [Book tickets here.](#)

Summerland Way Back In Business:

Motorists will have a safer drive after the completion of two projects between Casino and Woodenbong, funded by the Australian and NSW Governments through Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. [Find more information here.](#)

Funding And Other Opportunities

Government agencies and organisations offer grants and funding programs, designed to assist with improving your business or product offering. Review the latest opportunities for [grants in NSW](#) and [nationally via Austrade.](#)

Destination North Coast may be able to provide a Letter of Support (LOS) for your project if it aligns with the [Destination North Coast Destination Management Plan \(DMP\)](#). Letters of Support requests can be made [via the online form](#) found on our website.

[Create NSW Project & Multi-Year Funding](#)

Five new Arts and Cultural Funding Program - Project and Multi-year funding rounds are now open from Create NSW. Project funding is available for:

[Recreational Fishing Trusts Grants Program](#)

This program aims to deliver a wide range of projects and programs using funds from the Trusts to boost recreational fishing opportunities in NSW. **Closes 18 December 2024**

- **Creative Nations** - projects for First Nations organisations and individuals
- **Next Steps** - professional and skills development (for individuals)
- **Creative Steps** - new work development (for individuals)
- **Cultural Access** - projects by organisations and individuals that engages with NSW Government strategic priority areas.

Closes 2 December 2024.

[NSW Going Global Export Program](#)

The NSW Government is committed to building an exporting culture in NSW and providing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with the tools that help them to succeed and flourish internationally. Investment NSW will deliver 17 tailored Going Global streams (a combination of target international market and industry sector) across 2024-25. Apply now for streams currently open for applications or register your interest for upcoming streams. **Ongoing.**

[Active Transport Fund](#)

The ATF provides funding for the design and construction of new or existing bicycle and walking pathways to encourage the use of active transport, with \$100 million in funding available from 2024-25 to 2028-2029. The program is an application-based, merit-assessed funding program, open to all state and territory governments and Local Government Authorities (LGAs). **Closes 13 January 2025.**

[EV Destination Charging Grants](#)

Round three of the NSW Government's destination charging grants program is now live, offering a further \$12 million in funding to fill EV charging gaps along established regional NSW road trip routes. **Closes 31 January 2025.**

[NSW Heritage Grants](#)

This program aims to support the better management, maintenance, conservation and activation of declared Aboriginal Places under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. **Closes 30 January 2025.**

Sustainability & Eco-Tourism

EV Destination Charging Partner Marketing Toolkit

Learn about how regional businesses can have an EV charger co-funded under the NSW Government's Electric Vehicle (EV) Destination Charging Grants Program. [This toolkit](#) includes:

- background on the EV destination charging grant program
- key messages to use in public-facing communications materials
- suggested copy and creative assets to use for your marketing channels.

If you have questions about this document or its contents, email the [EV destination charging team](#).

North Coast Product Development

Raes On Wategos Opens Raes Guesthouses

Raes on Wategos welcomes a new chapter opening their second neighbouring property, [Raes Guesthouses](#), just 100 metres away from the original, and offering ten new accommodation suites, each receiving the full Raes treatment. Alongside the ten divinely decorated suites, the new site is home to several additional indoor spaces and two impressive lap pools. With a food and drink offering exclusively for hotel guests, there's space for private functions, events and intimate dining experiences.

[Blueys Beach Natural Health Centre](#)

Sauna and spa packages, massages and beauty treatments, yoga, meditation and more.

Tweed Escapes

[Tweed Escapes](#) is introducing a new seafood tour using locally caught seafood prepared by Tweed Coast Catering Chef James Doyle. Visitors can enjoy lunch and a leisurely 2.5-hour cruise on the Rous and Tweed Rivers.

Riverview Hotel Motel

All 11 rooms of the [Riverview Hotel Motel](#) are now refurbished and waiting to welcome visitors to South Murwillumbah. The new outdoor deck offers wonderful waterside views whilst the Riv

Bistro provides country pub hospitality and generous meals. With easy access to the Northern Rivers Rail Trail this accommodation spot is a cyclists delight and an easy walk into town. Only a 10-minute drive away is the Tweed Regional Art Gallery.

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](#).

[Swell Chasers: Surf Stories from the Mid-North Coast](#) - Yarilla Arts and Museum, Coffs Harbour 23 November 2024-2 February 2025

[Nambucca Valley Open Streets Festival](#) - Macksville 23 November 2024

[Coffs Coast Craft Beer Festival](#) - Hoey Moey Coffs Harbour 7 December 2024

[Sculptures Rock](#) - South West Rocks 16 December 2024-5 January 2025.

[Summersong Music Camp](#) 17-22 January 2025, Tyalgum

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