



Destination
North Coast NSW

Visitor Economy News



Music Tourism Strikes a Chord in NSW

Music tourism - where fans travel to experience concerts, festivals and music-related landmarks - has emerged as one of the top global drivers of visitor economy growth.

Also called "gig tripping," the trend taps into the rising popularity of experience tourism, with travellers seeking immersive and cultural events, activities and experiences that enrich their trips.

Tourism Research Australia data shows NSW is the number one destination in Australia for event tourism visitors, nights and expenditure, while the Collinson International research report, *The Value of Sports and Music Tourism*, found Sydney is the top global destination for sports and music fans.

[Find More Here](#)



Great Southern Nights Ignites Live Music Scene

Destination NSW is cranking up its focus on music tourism in 2025, with more headline artists and regions added to the Great Southern Nights line-up across NSW from 21 March to 6 April.

Alison Wonderland, Budjerah, Mallrat, The Screaming Jets, Thirsty Merc, Marcia Hines, The Paper Kites and more have joined a line-up that already features Missy Higgins, Ben Lee, Bootleg Rascals, Charley, King Stingray, The Cat Empire, Hoodoo Gurus, Lime Cordiale and Birds of Tokyo.

Great Southern Nights will bring vibrancy to Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and the Central Coast - as well as regional locations including Byron Bay.

Great Southern Nights is delivered proudly by Destination NSW in partnership with the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA).

[Find Out More](#)

Australian Government to Acquire \$50 Million of Rex's Debt

The Australian Government has [committed its support to the continued operation of Rex Airlines](#), announcing it will acquire \$50 million of debt from the carrier's largest creditor, PAGAC Regulus Holdings.

The acquisition means the Government will become Rex's principal secured creditor and will continue to work closely with the airline's administrators through the extended convening period, after the initial sale process did not find a

2025 Tourism Australia Media Kit

Tourism Australia's 2025 Australia Media Kit is now available to [download here](#) and on the [Media Resources](#) page on the Tourism Australia corporate website. Full of travel inspiration, this 30-page mobile friendly, digital asset 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.

The Tweed has been featured as a must-visit destination in the NSW itinerary of the Tourism

suitable buyer. The Government will also seek to become a voting member on Rex's Committee of Inspection, it announced.

Australia Media Kit, with Tropical Fruit World and the Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk also highlighted.

Industry Insights



November ABS International Visitor Arrivals Released

Last week the Australian Bureau of Statistics released the latest international visitor arrivals data which saw visitor arrivals reach 679,280 for the month of November 2024 and for the year-end almost 8.2 million, which was 17.6 % more than the previous year.

[Find Out More](#)



Young Australians Embrace Cruising

TripADeal has reported a surge in cruise bookings, particularly among younger Australians. Its data shows that a third of its cruise customers are now under 35, with the average age dropping 10 years since 2020. This shift was also evident in the latest Cruise Lines International Association data, which revealed the average cruiser was now aged 48.4, down from 50.4 in 2019.

[Find Out More](#)

Google's Future of Travel Research: 2040 Predictions & Trends

Google predicts a significant transformation in the travel industry by 2040. Overall, the [Future of Travel report](#) provides strategic insights for the travel industry to adapt and thrive in the coming decades. It highlights that India, China, and the U.S. are expected to be the fastest-growing source markets. Indian travellers are projected to increase fivefold, driven by higher passport ownership and easier visa policies. This report also emphasises the importance of understanding evolving traveller needs and preferences, such as the increasing demand for localised experiences and the growing influence of digital-savvy travellers.

Skift Megatrends 2025

Skift's Megatrends 2025 forecast the top trends that will define travel for the year ahead. It highlights a clash between the desire to unplug and the pressure to stay connected, with a focus on more intentional and soulful travel experiences. Key trends include the growing demand for pet-friendly accommodations, the professionalisation of influencer marketing in travel, and AI innovation. There is also the rise of live tourism and authentic, remote experiences as travellers prioritise connection and uniqueness over traditional luxury.

[Read the report here.](#)

Industry Development



Register for Destination Australia 2025

Tourism Australia will host the annual Destination Australia conference on Wednesday 19 March 2025 at the International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney). This year, with a theme of 'We are the Australian tourism industry,' the future evolution and growth of our sector will be the focus of the day.

[Register Here](#)



Business Beyond Disasters Program

Are you a business or non-profit owner, operator, or employee trading in the NSW Northern Rivers region? This FREE 10-week program from the NSW Reconstruction Authority will help you to set you, your business and your community up to do business beyond disasters. The Program runs from March to May 2025.

[Find Out More](#)

Free, Personalised ATDW Support

Are you wondering if your Tourism Business Profile could work harder for you, but not sure where to start? Standing out online is a challenge for all businesses. That's why ATDW offers free one-on-one profile optimisation sessions to help you succeed. The friendly team of experts will guide you in enhancing your profile to attract more customers. Boost your visibility and connect with the right audience. Visit the ATDW website today, or [book your one-on-one session here.](#)

Arts MNC Professional Development Workshops

Arts Mid North Coast are kicking off the new year with THREE must-attend professional development workshops for creatives in the Mid North Coast this February! These workshops are part of their [Smart Art initiative](#) which aims to empower the Mid North Coast arts and creative sector with tools, resources, and opportunities to build capacity and develop sustainable creative careers.

Around the Region



Cubana Cantina Now Open

Cubana Cantina officially opens on Friday, 7 February 2025, and with its fun and relaxed atmosphere, will quickly become a favourite place to dine for locals and visitors alike.

Located within the colourful **Cubana Resort - Nambucca Heads**, Cubana Cantina features a vibrant Mexican-infused menu of small dishes that are perfect for tasting, shareable plates, and more substantial meals.



Point Plomer Campground Welcomes Visitors Again

Point Plomer campground in Limeburners Creek National Park, has recently reopened following important revitalisation work.

New upgrades to this popular spot include increased shade, creation of larger and defined campsites, improved access roads and increased day-use parking. The campground is ideal for a family holiday or a relaxing weekend getaway.

[Find Out More](#)



Australia's Best Regional Coffee Location

Australia takes its coffee very seriously. But which city has the best? A new study put the controversial question to the test, with surprising results... Somewhat unexpectedly, the breezy beachside city of Coffs Harbour beat out all major cities to claim the crown of best coffee region in Australia.

See the full list using the link below, courtesy of Australian Traveller.

[Find Out More](#)

[Find Out More](#)



Experience the Magic of Orchids in Woolgoolga!

The Woolgoolga District Orchid Society will host the 23rd Australian Orchid Council (AOC) International Conference and Show over 1-5 October 2025, the event will showcase the region's rich biodiversity and celebrate the theme "Orchids from the Mountains to the Sea."

Early bird registration is now open, offering discounted rates until 1 July 2025.

[Find Out More](#)

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.

Special Entertainment Precinct Grants

A new \$1 million Special Entertainment Precinct (SEP) Kickstart Grant Program has been announced by the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner. The program will provide councils that have already committed to establishing a SEP in their local government area with an opportunity to apply for funding ranging from \$50,000 to \$200,000 to help establish SEPs.

Closes 12 March 2025.

Strengthening Rural Communities - Small & Vital

Grants up to \$10,000 are available for a broad range of grassroots, community-led initiatives that directly and clearly benefit local communities that strengthen local people, places and climate

Aboriginal Affairs NSW 2024-2025 Cultural Grants Program

Aboriginal community organisations and groups across NSW are now invited to apply for grants to support events and activities that celebrate and promote Aboriginal cultures. The NSW Government is offering grants from \$500 to \$20,000 to support, strengthen, protect and maintain traditional and contemporary expressions of Aboriginal culture. **Closes 21 March 2025.**

EV Destination Charging Grants

The closing date for the latest round of the NSW Government's EV Destination Charging Grants program has been extended to 28 March 2025. The program provides co-funding to own and

solutions, with a preference for smaller communities (populations under 15,000). **Closes 27 March 2025.**

operate public EV fast chargers at visitor destinations across regional NSW. **Closes 28 March 2025.**

Sustainability and Eco-tourism



How to Make Your Business More Sustainable in 2025

Inspired by their certified operators, Ecotourism Australia have outlined five impactful steps you can take to make your business more sustainable in the coming year, improve your reputation, and attract more eco-friendly travellers.

1. Reduce your environmental impact
2. Support Local Communities
3. Collaborate with First Nations Communities
4. Offer Eco-Friendly Experiences
5. Educate Guests on Responsible Tourism

[Find More Here](#)

Accelerating Climate Action: Unpacking the Second Edition of a Net Zero Roadmap for Travel & Tourism

This webinar will take a deep dive into the second edition of WTTC's Net Zero Roadmap for Travel & Tourism. This updated and comprehensive guide, launched at COP29 in partnership with the State Tourism Authority of Azerbaijan, provides a blueprint for the sector to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. **12 February 2025 at 10am.** [Register here.](#)

North Coast Product Development

[Stef & Co](#)

A brand-new bakery, café, cocktail bar and pizzeria restaurant located at the beautiful Promenade on Coffs Creek at the Jetty.

[Lord Howe Island Perfumery](#)

Indulge in nature's finest - Island botanicals along with flowers, herbs and citrus from historic Thornleigh Farm are ethically harvested and lovingly crafted into refreshing hydrosols. Enjoy the Island aromas that are made in a beautiful copper still. Visit the Distillery on Saturdays between 10am and 12pm.

[Evans Head Pizza By The Beach](#)

Recently reopened after moving/renovations. Open lunch and dinner 7 days.

[The Platform - Murwillumbah](#)

A new café has opened at the historic Murwillumbah Railway Station - the head of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail. Owned by The Munch Bunch group who already own 2 cafes, plus Apex Dining at the Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre.

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](#).

[The Hidden Theatre](#): Glasshouse Port Macquarie, from 8 February 2025

[North Coast Show & Shine](#): Ballina, 23 February 2025

[2025 Ocean Film Festival](#): Coffs Harbour, 1 March 2025

[Reflections Cadet Cup Bonny Hills - Powered by Surfest](#): Bonny Hills, 1-2 March 2025

[Australian Women's Golf Classic](#): Coffs Harbour, 13-16 March 2025

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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](#). You can find training and other content on our [YouTube channel](#). We also encourage you to share our updates with your networks, simply forward this email and they can [subscribe here](#).

