



Destination  
North Coast NSW

## Visitor Economy News



MidCoast Council is proud to announce that the Barrington Coast region has achieved ECO Destination Certification through Ecotourism Australia, highlighting their dedication to protecting their environment. Located on the lower mid-north coast of New South Wales, three hours north of Sydney, the Barrington Coast is a haven for nature lovers and home to incredible landscapes such as the World Heritage-listed Gondwana Rainforests of the Barrington Tops and the Ramsar Convention designated wetland of international importance the Myall Lakes.

This milestone makes the Barrington Coast the fifth destination in New South Wales and the 13th in Australia to receive this distinguished recognition.

MidCoast's ECO Destination Certification was announced yesterday with Destination North Coast pleased to be one of the many attending and celebrating this achievement for the region.

[Find More Here](#)



### **Top Tourism Town Nominations Open**

The NSW Top Tourism Town awards program has opened for 2025. Run by the NSW Tourism Association, the program brings a focus to regional tourism and highlights destinations from coast to country. Towns can enter one of three categories depending on their size, with local councils and Accredited Visitor Information Centres encouraged to submit nominations.

[Find More Here](#)



### **DNC Industry Networking - Lismore 26 February 2025**

The Destination North Coast Board traditionally rotates around the region for our bi-monthly Board meetings, and we have pleasure in planning our February meeting to be in Lismore.

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: Afternoon Industry Networking
- When: Wednesday 26 February 2025
- Time: 5.30-7.00pm
- Where: The Sherwood Hotel, Molesworth St Lismore

RSVP is required by Thursday 20 February 2025 and for catering purposes, please include any dietary restrictions.

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

[RSVP here](#)



### **Tourism Award Success: Free Planning Template**

Now is the perfect time for operators to start preparing for tourism award submissions. Crafting a strong entry takes time, and having clear business, marketing, and sustainability plans in place can make all the difference.

To support tourism businesses in this process, [Tilma Group](#) has generously provided a free **business plan template** designed to streamline award submissions. This easy-to-use template helps operators structure their key achievements and business strategies, saving time and improving their chances of success.

We extend our gratitude to Tilma Group for providing this valuable resource!

Download the template today and set your business up for both operational success and future award recognition.

[Find Out More](#)

## Industry Insights



### Soundcheck 2 Report

If you are looking for some interesting insights and data into challenges facing music festivals, Creative Australia has released its second research report, Soundcheck 2.

[Find Out More](#)

### What the Future?

Kayak has released its report titled "[What the Future](#)" (WTF), which examines the transformations expected in the tourism sector by 2030. Based on data collected from over 9,100 respondents, the report identifies eight key trends to revolutionize the travel experience. The future of travel is characterized by a convergence of technological innovation, sustainability, and personalisation, with the aspirations of a new generation of travellers.

### Australians prioritise saving for travel

[NAB data](#) shows four in 10 Australians are actively budgeting for a major expense, with almost half of those saving for travel.



### Sport tourism on the rise in 2025

Skyscanner's *Travel Trends 2025* report shows 32 per cent of 25-34-year-olds - and 28 per cent of all Australian travellers - plan to travel to see a sporting event in 2025.

[Find Out More](#)

### Direct hotel bookings on the rise

[SiteMinder's Hotel Booking Trends](#) report shows direct bookings via hotel websites were the third most popular accommodation booking method for Australian in 2024, generating an average of \$778 per booking, 8.5 per cent higher than 2023.

### New TRA country profiles

Tourism Research Australia has developed [country profiles](#) to provide valuable information about Australia's inbound tourism markets. These profiles are designed to help Government, industry, operators, peak bodies and researchers better understand the international visitor economy, including specific visitor markets.

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## Industry Development



### TA Industry Webinar

The first Tourism Australia Industry Webinar for 2025 will be on 14 February 2025 at 11am. Joining the webinar will be Jennifer Doig, Tourism Australia's Regional General Manager for South, South East Asia.

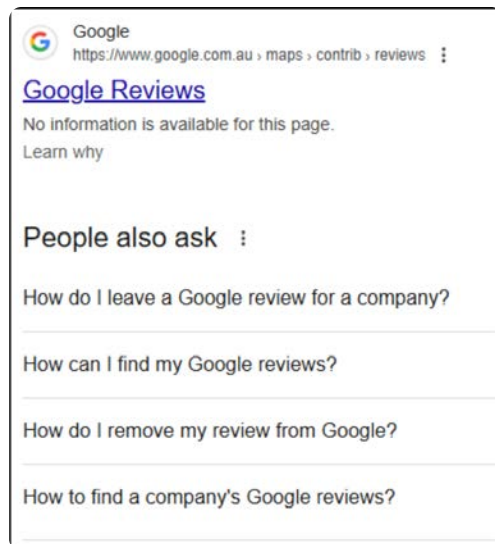
[Register Here](#)

### DNC Training Needs Survey 2025

2025 is in full swing, and we are eager to understand what training programs will be most useful for the North Coast tourism industry and stakeholders. [This survey](#) has been extended and will now close at 5pm Monday, 17 February 2025.

### Navigating the Insurance Landscape

Sparrowly Group recently conducted a webinar on Navigating the Minefield of Insurance. You can [access the recording here](#).



### Managing Online Reviews

Good customer reviews can boost your business, but bad ones can hurt. Learn about online reviews and how to manage negative ones.

[Find Out More](#)

### Have your say: new rights for Australian air travellers

The Australian Government is seeking input on its draft Aviation Customer Rights Charter. A first for Australia, the charter sets out the expectations for fair treatment of customers by airlines and airports.

The charter is among the commitments of the 2024 Aviation White Paper. [Submissions close 28 February 2025](#).

## Around the Region

Discover what's been happening across the tourism industry within the Destination North Coast network. To share your new product, experience or event, please [get in touch with Ashley Gray](#), our Industry Development Manager.



### Lismore's Legends of Cricket - Twenty20 Cricket Match

Excitement is building for the 'Legends of Cricket - Twenty20 Cricket Match' with local cricket legend Adam Gilchrist, along with Steve O'Keefe,



### Elements Improving Accessibility

Elements of Byron is setting a new standard for accessible travel, ensuring every guest can experience the resort with ease. Beyond meeting building code requirements, the team has

Jason Gillespie, Dan Christian, Sammy-Jo Johnson, Nathan Hauritz and Georgie Redmayne taking the field. Joined by Powderfinger's Bernard Fanning and Grinspoon's Pat Davern on Saturday 15 February at Oakes Oval, Lismore from 3pm-6pm.

[Find Out More](#)



### **Coffs Coast Community Arts And Culture Funding**

The City of Coffs Harbour through its Community Arts and Cultural Development Grants Program are supporting artists, groups or organisations planning to deliver an artistic or cultural project to enrich the community with grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$7,000 available.

Applications close at 4pm on Monday 17 March 2025. Two special workshops running in early February aim to support applicants and creatives.

[Find Out More](#)

implemented personalised adjustments, assistive technology, and specialised staff training in partnership with Social Futures. MICE events are also catered for, with accessible layouts and hearing loops in all conference rooms.

[Find Out More](#)



### **Werrikimbe National Park's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Werrikimbe National Park, inland from Port Macquarie, celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary 29-30 March 2025. This free event will be held on the grounds of recently renovated Mooraback Cabin and will include ranger-guided walks, speeches, celebratory cake and lunch. Enjoy a nocturnal or morning bird walk, the Carabean walk through Gondwana rainforest or the Platypus Pool walk along the banks of the Hastings River.

[Find Out More](#)

### **New additions to NSW National Parks**

Threatened plants and animals will be protected following additions made to a number of North Coast national parks in 2024.

Over 40 hectares were added to Nymboi-Binderay National Park, 45km northwest of Coffs Harbour, providing habitat for 21 threatened species, including koalas, gliders and rufous bettongs.

A total of 1,259 hectares, 50km northwest of Taree, now links Bretti and Khatambuhl Nature Reserves. This corridor supports koalas, with 70% containing feed trees and over 20 other threatened species, including the Manning River helmeted turtle and southern greater glider.

Two areas (398ha and 487ha) were added to Cottan-Bimbang National Park, 45km northwest of Wauchope, encompassing 4km of Ralfes Creek. This land supports 22 threatened species, including koalas, scrub turpentine and the giant barred frog.

[Read the media release.](#)

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## **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.

#### [Regional Arts Touring funding program](#)

Artists, creatives and producers, including individuals and organisations can apply for up to \$60,000 for small-scale tours and up to \$120,000 for larger tours. **Closes 17 March 2025.**

#### [NSW Open Streets Program](#)

Part of the NSW Government's Vibrant Streets Package, the program provides up to \$350,000 in funding per successful applicant to support recurring street-based events over three years. The goal is to enhance local communities, support cultural industries, and drive economic growth by activating public spaces. **Closes 14 March 2025.**

#### [Venue Upgrade grants - Program 1](#)

Venues who demonstrate a commitment to increasing live music programming may apply for grants to support advice from consultants and experts to create fit-for-purpose venues e.g. reports, applications, planning expenses, legal services, audits. **Closes 17 March 2025.**

#### [Venue Upgrade grants - Program 2](#)

Grants are available for dedicated live music venues to support venue upgrades that enhance audience and visitor experience. Funding will support the purchase of equipment and a range of infrastructure development works. **Closes 14 April 2025.**

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## Sustainability and Eco-tourism



### **Crystalbrook Collection Hotels & Resorts secures groundbreaking Sustainability-Linked Loan with Australia's largest bank**

The landmark achievement reinforces Crystalbrook Collection's commitment to environmental leadership in the hospitality sector and highlights the critical role of independently audited sustainability reporting in unlocking favourable financial pricing.

Sustainability-Linked Loans (SLLs) are a relatively new financial instrument that incentivises companies to meet ambitious environmental and social targets. Unlike traditional loans, the terms of an SLL are directly linked to a company's sustainability performance, with metrics such as carbon emissions, water usage, and waste management tied to the cost of borrowing. If the borrower meets or exceeds pre-agreed sustainability performance targets, they may benefit from reduced interest rates.

[Find More Here](#)

### **Tourism sustainability certifications alliance**

Ecotourism Australia has become a founding member of a new global association for sustainable tourism, the Tourism Sustainability Certifications Alliance (TSCA). Collectively, TSCA members are

responsible for certifying more than 19,000 enterprises, organisations and destinations across the globe, representing the largest cohort of certified operators worldwide. [Find more here.](#)

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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](#).

[Bangalow Fim Festival](#) 6-16 March 2025 Bangalow

[Senior Oztag NSW State Championships](#) 21-23 March 2025 Coffs Harbour

[Macleay Valley Coast Gravity Enduro](#) 22 March 2025 Kempsey

[Laurieton Multisport Challenge](#) 30 March 2025 Laurieton

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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](#). 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](#).



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