



Destination  
North Coast NSW

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## Visitor Economy News

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### Game Changing Prospects for Business Events on the North Coast NSW!

Destination North Coast commissioned a detailed feasibility study for a North Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre. The report highlights significant opportunities to strengthen our visitor economy and Business Events Market.

Key findings include:

- Estimated to deliver **\$251M in incremental income, 83 construction and 285 new jobs** (10 years)
- The **sweet spot for event capacity lies between 500-1,500 delegates**, positioning our region to attract larger-scale national conferences currently underrepresented locally.
- Beyond economic return, benefits include **knowledge transfer, community use, urban renewal, and regional tourism growth**.

The study reaffirms that the North Coast has the vital ingredients to consolidate our position as a leading business events destination - accessible airports, high-quality accommodation, experiences, strong local business support and amazing weather and experiences.

A big thank you to all stakeholders involved - this insight is a valuable step toward securing a brighter, event-rich future for the North Coast.

[Read the report here](#)

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## NSW Top Tour Guide Finalists

NSW Tourism Association has announced the finalists for the inaugural NSW Top Tour Guide Award, recognising outstanding individuals who bring destinations to life through guided experiences, storytelling and local knowledge. The new category celebrates the vital role tour guides play in creating memorable visitor experiences.

Congratulations to Tiga Cross from **Coffs Coast Wildlife Sanctuary** making the finalist list.

Winners will be revealed on 4 June 2025.

[See all finalists here](#)

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Image: Destination NSW

## Strong Audience Demand for Live Music

A new report released by Creative Australia and Music Australia has revealed Australians are saving up for live music experiences, despite cost-of-living pressures.

[Find more here](#)

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## Growing Interest in Arts Tourism

A new report by Create Australia explores the role of arts experiences as visitor economy drivers. The report presents trends and insights on how Australians connect with the arts when travelling on daytrips and overnight stays. [Read the report here.](#)

## Night-Time Economy Quarterly Report | 24 Hour Economy

Powered by the Data After Dark platform, these quarterly reports capture key trends, metrics and developments that shape the social, economic and cultural aspects of NSW's night-time landscape.

[Find the reports here.](#)

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# Industry Insights



### **Top Performing International Visitor Markets For NSW**

The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows the top three international visitor source markets for NSW in March 2025 were the United States (44,320 trips), China (29,700) and New Zealand (29,340).

NSW welcomed 286,400 short-term visitor arrivals during the period, an increase of 4100 compared with the corresponding month of the previous year.

Short-term visitor arrivals to NSW from the United Kingdom, South Korea, India and Indonesia all surpassed 2019 levels in March 2025.

[Learn more here](#)

### **April Super Break Boosts Hospitality Spending**

The CommBank Household Spending Insights Index shows hospitality spending rose 1.4 per cent in April 2025. [Learn more here.](#)

### **Virtual Assistants are Transforming Travel Planning**

The travel sector is seeing dramatic changes, largely thanks to artificial intelligence (AI). AI is changing vacation planning and advertising strategies. These innovations promise greater efficiency and cost reductions, but they also raise questions about authenticity and the future role of humans in tourism. [Learn more here.](#)

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## **Industry Development**





## Get Inspired at the 2025 North Coast Tourism Symposium & Awards Gala

Destination North Coast, in partnership with Byron Shire Council, invites tourism professionals, changemakers, and innovators to the 2025 North Coast Tourism Symposium and Awards Gala, taking place on **31 July 2025** in Byron Bay.

This year's symposium promises to be our most inspiring yet. Being held at the Byron Community Theatre, the event will explore the theme: ***"Inspire! Shaping Tomorrow's Visitor Economy."***

Headlining the day is keynote speaker **Mark Bouris AM**, one of Australia's most respected entrepreneurs and a driving force for business innovation. Mark has established a successful career from building disruptive businesses to challenge the market and provide smarter solutions for consumers. In addition, he is the author of *Wealth Wizard*, *The Yellow Brick Road to Your Financial Security*, and *What it Takes*, and has recently created and produced a new TV show along with Channel 7 called *The Mentor*.

Alongside him, attendees will hear vital updates from Destination North Coast, **Destination NSW**, and **Tourism Australia**, plus gain insights from compelling case studies and panel discussions designed to challenge perspectives and spark actionable ideas.

After a day of big ideas and bold conversations, we'll celebrate at the prestigious **North Coast Regional Tourism Awards Gala** being held at Elements of Byron. This elegant evening will honour the visionaries and trailblazers shaping the future of tourism across the North Coast.

**Seats are limited and demand is high-register now to avoid missing out.**

[Get tickets here](#)

## Tourism Australia's Advance Program

Tourism Australia's Advance Program is now open for applications. The program supports industry-led projects that attract new international business events to Australia or boost international delegate attendance at confirmed events. [Applications close 30 June 2025.](#)

## EV Infrastructure Summit Sydney 17th - 18th June

Now in its second year, the EV Infrastructure Summit provides a dedicated platform for local and state government officials to engage with the challenges and opportunities surrounding EV infrastructure. As key decision-makers in planning, regulation, and implementation, this is an opportunity to gain actionable insights into the latest trends, technologies, and strategies driving the transition to electric vehicles. [Find more here.](#)

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## 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 or submit them via the link below.



### Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre Consultation

The Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre is a proposed new interpretation and education centre that will connect visitors to Gumbaynggirr Country and the wonders of Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage. This review of environmental factors (REF) documents the environmental impact assessment of the proposed activities to construct and operate the new Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre. It examines the significance of likely impacts of the proposal and details the measures required to mitigate adverse impacts to natural, cultural and social values.

**Have your say here**

### Elements of Byron Launches Winter Wellness Retreats

[Elements of Byron](#) has partnered with leading movement and mindset expert Odette Blacklock to launch a new series of immersive winter wellness retreats, timed to coincide with the global rise in wellness-focused travel. Running across three weekends from June to August, including World Wellness Day, the retreats offer science-led sessions, breathwork, and movement designed to reset, recharge and optimise. [Read media release.](#)

### Voting is Now Open for the 2025 Your Local Club Perfect Plate Awards

The [Your Local Club Perfect Plate Awards](#) is the ultimate NSW club dining competition and voting is now open. This is your chance to sample the best food Your Local Club has to offer, and you'll also have the chance to win epic prizes simply for dining and voting. Best of luck to the North Coast venues below.

Pacific Palms Bowling Club  
Laurieton United Services Club  
Crescent Head Country Club  
Grafton Golf Club  
Ballina RSL  
C.ex Coffs

Club Taree  
Wauchope Country Club  
Seagulls Club Tweed Heads West  
Yamba Golf and Country Club  
Bangalow Bowlo  
Twin Towns Tweed Heads



### Explore Coffs Through Colour

Uncover the creative soul of the city on the Coffs City Centre Street Art Trail! Wander through laneways alive with bold murals, graffiti masterpieces, and cultural storytelling that reflects the heart of the Coffs Coast.

It's free, fun, and perfect for a morning of discovery, photos, and great coffee along the way.

[Find more here](#)



### The Great Pie Trail in Lismore

From classic meat pies and rich savoury fillings to sweet, indulgent options, The Great Pie Trail has it all. Some bakeries are renowned for their secret recipes, others for their unique specialties, and some are even pushing the boundaries with exotic flavours. As you drive from town to town, you'll savour warm, freshly baked pies. The best part - You'll be exploring the beautiful Lismore region while doing it!

[Find more here](#)

### Sunrise on the North Coast

Channel 7's Sunrise is in region this week, putting a spotlight on Bellingen, Lismore, Ballina, Byron and the Tweed.

### Historic Milestone in World-First Koala Breeding Achieved

A world-first right here in New South Wales - every breeding pair in [Koala Conservation Australia's Wild Koala Breeding Program](#) has successfully produced a joey. This is a monumental leap forward for koala conservation, especially with extinction in New South Wales, ACT and Queensland predicted by 2050 without immediate action.

The program is *breeding wild koalas for release into the wild* - not captivity - and all joeys are being raised hands-off to preserve natural behaviours. [Read media release.](#)



## New Products and Experiences

Have a **new** product or experience you'd like to tell us and DNSW about? Submit it via the link below.



Submit your product updates here

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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.

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### [Royal Australian Historical Society NSW Cultural Grant NSW 2025](#)

The Cultural Grants program, administered by the Royal Australian Historical Society, assists historical research and publication of local, community and regional history projects. Funding of up to \$5,000 is available for eligible applicants. **Closes 25 June 2025**

### [Screen NSW Development Fund](#)

Screen NSW Development funding supports writers, directors and producers to develop fiction or unscripted (documentary) and online projects with distinctive ideas and ambitious stories. **Closes 30 June 2025**

### [Heritage Emergency Works](#)

This grant provides assistance to declared Aboriginal places and items on the State Heritage Register that need repairs due to, or to address risks caused by, unexpected events. **Closes 30 June 2025**

### [Boating Infrastructure Emergency Repair Pool NSW](#)

Funding to repair, replace or improve public boating infrastructure in NSW. **Closes June 2028**

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## Sustainability and Eco-tourism



**NSW Sustainability Awards Open**

The 2025 NSW Sustainability Awards are open for entries. In partnership with the NSW Government, the Banksia Foundation is spotlighting those leading the way in sustainability. Among the accolades is the Sustainable Tourism Award. An Online information session will be held on 9 July 2025. [Find more here.](#)

## Climate Disclosure Laws

New climate disclosure laws have come into effect in Australia, with important implications for tourism businesses of all sizes. As of 1 January 2025, large businesses are required to report on their climate-related risks, opportunities, and greenhouse gas emissions under a new national reporting framework. This marks a major shift in corporate reporting - placing climate disclosure on par with financial reporting, and making directors personally accountable for sustainability statements.

While these obligations apply directly to large entities, the impacts extend throughout the tourism supply chain. Smaller operators - such as accommodation providers, tour companies and local service businesses - may now be asked to supply environmental data to help larger corporate businesses to meet their own reporting requirements.

To help tourism operators and service providers navigate this new landscape, EarthCheck has partnered with international law firm K&L Gates to produce a briefing paper: *Australia's Climate-Related Financial Disclosure Regime*. [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](#).

[All One Under The Sun](#) - Yarrila Arts and Museum Coffs Harbour Until 1 June 2025

[Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens Open Day](#) - Lismore 25 May 2025

[Kyogle Readers and Writers Festival](#) - Kyogle 13-14 June 2025

[Love Lennox Festival](#) - Lennox Head 14 June 2025

[Lismore Lantern Parade](#) - Lismore 21 June 2025

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## 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](#).

