



Destination  
North Coast NSW



## Visitor Economy News

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*Image: Nimbin Rainbow Walk, Courtesy of Visit Lismore*

## Key Updates

# NSW BUDGET 2025-26



Our plan for Regional New South Wales



## NSW Budget Update

The 2025-26 NSW Budget has been delivered with Destination NSW securing \$323.1 million to drive visitor demand, support world-class experiences and strengthen the state's position as Australia's home of major events.

Destination NSW has partnered with CommBank iQ to harness de-identified transactional data from millions of consumer purchases across the state - unlocking powerful insights to support the growth of NSW's visitor economy. Destination NSW and its Destination Network partners in regional NSW will have access to Destination iQ - delivering insights to analyse and track aggregated visitor spending behaviour across regions and timeframes.

[Find more here](#)

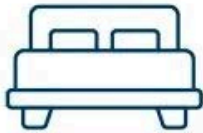


**3.9 MILLION  
INTERNATIONAL VISITORS  
TO NSW**

+5.4% YEAR ON YEAR

**RECORD  
\$13.4 BILLION**

INTERNATIONAL EXPENDITURE  
+15% YEAR ON YEAR



**RECORD  
102.2 MILLION  
VISITOR NIGHTS**

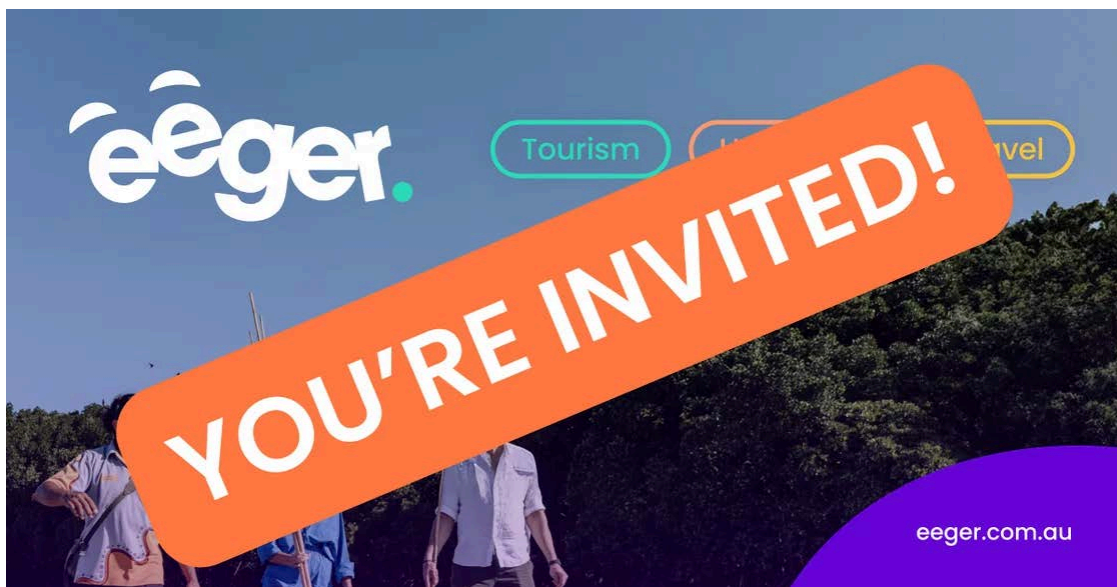
+7.3% YEAR ON YEAR

## NSW Breaks Records

Strategic investments in aviation access, major events and world-class visitor experiences have delivered a record result for international visitor expenditure in NSW.

Regional NSW also saw strong growth, particularly from international travellers visiting friends and relatives. The regions welcomed 700,000 international visitors (up 4.5 per cent), who stayed 17.7 million nights (up 15.8 per cent) and spent \$1.2 billion (up 10.5 per cent).

[Find more here](#)





## eeger Platform Launch

A new career and training destination for Australian Tourism, Hospitality, and Travel is launching on Friday, 25 July and eeger wants you to join them in celebrating the next step for careers, businesses and the industry in your local capital city!

eeger has been developed for industry, by industry and aims to connect job seekers with fulfilling careers while supporting businesses across Australia's vibrant visitor economy.

[Find more here](#)

## North Coast Tourism Symposium Two Weeks Away!



### Breakout Session Details

In addition to the Keynote 'in conversation' style interview with Mark Bouris AM, this year's Symposium program features four breakout sessions that blend grassroots insight with forward-thinking ideas.

In the Local Legends session, tourism operators Brenda Miley (Let's Go Surfing), Justine Syme (Reflections Holidays Forster) and Peta Alexopoulos (Positive Energy Adventures & Retreats) will share personal stories of running and growing their businesses, while Mark "Mono" Stewart explores inclusive tourism through the lens of an adaptive surf event.

The afternoon shifts to future-focused themes, with Liz Ward (Tourism Tribe) and Antony Frino (Booking.com) leading AI Innovation, and economist Clifford Bennett unpacking the economic trends shaping our sector.

Each session brings fresh, practical

### Book Your Activity Today

After a full day of ideas and inspiration, it's time to recharge, reconnect and experience the magic of the North Coast for yourself. Choose from three post-symposium experiences to help you unwind and explore Byron Bay on Friday 1 August.

#### Option 1: Crystal Castle & Shambhala Gardens

Step into a world of tranquility and transformation at The Crystal Castle. Perfect for those seeking stillness, beauty and reconnection.

🕒 10.00am – 2.30pm

💰 \$80pp – includes return transfers from Elements of Byron

#### Option 2: Reconnect at Byron Yoga Centre

Enjoy a gentle yoga session in a serene, purpose-built studio, followed by a wholesome lunch made with produce from the centre's own organic garden.

🕒 10.30am – 1.30pm

💰 \$30pp – includes class, lunch and

perspectives to help grow a stronger, more resilient visitor economy.

**Registration closes on 25 July, buy your ticket today!**

transfers from Byron Bus Interchange  
🧘 11.00am yoga class | 12.30pm lunch

**Option 3: Cape Byron Kayak Adventure**  
With views of the lighthouse and stories from local guides, it's the ultimate way to see Byron from the water.

🕒 10.00am – 12.00pm

💰 \$70pp – includes all equipment

Spots are limited and time is running out!  
Book in [here](#) by 25 July.

[Click here to get your tickets before 25 July](#)

## Museums of History NSW Strategy

The Museums of History NSW Strategy 2025–30 has been launched. Museums of History NSW encompasses a portfolio of museums, heritage sites, collections, the nation's oldest archive and recordkeeping services. Over the next five years it aims to connect more people with the history of NSW and deliver inspiring experiences.

[Learn more](#)

## Creative Australia's Creative Workplaces

The Creative Workplaces website provides information and resources for people working across all art forms, including starting and running creative arts business, contracts and payments, a legal pack for the music industry, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property information, and more.

[Learn more](#)

# Industry Insights



## Adventure tourism on the rise

A report by Big Red Group has revealed rising demand for adventure tourism experiences. The Seasonal Experiences Index: Autumn 2025 report found consumers are increasingly seeking thrills – with 18.5 per cent of experiences booked during the shoulder season falling under the adventure category.

[Read the report](#)

## Global leisure travel set to triple by 2040

The travel sector stands on the cusp of significant expansion. A recent Boston Consulting Group (BCG) analysis, drawing

## Noctourism is Trending

From star-gazing, solstice swims and spectacular light shows and festivals such as VIVID and Tasmania's Aurora Australis and Dark Mofo, night-time tourism is a top



from a survey of nearly 5,000 individuals with a propensity for travel, anticipates that global leisure travel expenditures will potentially triple, moving from \$5 trillion in 2024 to approximately \$15 trillion by the year 2040.

[More](#)

travel trend for 2025. How can you leverage this? Consider how you can incorporate these after-dark activities into your experience and capitalise on a new rising trend.

[More](#)

## Industry Development



### Creating Nature-Based Experiences Webinar

Join Destination NSW's free webinar to discover how your business can tap into the growing demand for sustainable, nature-based travel.

Hear from experience providers Australia By Nature, CoastXP and Navigate Expeditions, and learn how to integrate nature into your offering and attract conscious, experience-driven visitors.

**Date:** Monday 28 July 2025

**Time:** 10:30am – 11:30am

[Register here](#)

### Northern Rivers Rail Trail Cultural Engagement Workshops

The Northern Rivers Rail Trail Aboriginal Tourism Development Project is a region-wide initiative funded by NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development aimed at building the capacity of local First Nations tourism operators and foster strong

cultural tourism enterprises along the Northern Rivers Rail Trail. Join Waagayamba Consultants for a meaningful day of information sharing, collaboration and planning to yarn about the future of Aboriginal cultural tourism along the Northern Rivers Rail Trail. These workshops are part of a region-wide engagement series to ensure Aboriginal voices are front and centre in shaping the next phase of the Rail Trail project.

#### Information Session Dates

- Lismore - 04/08/2025 | 10am - 3pm Koori Mail, 11 Molesworth Street, Lismore
- Byron Bay - 06/08/2025 - 10am - 3pm Byron Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, 419 Hinterland Way, Knockrow
- Tweed Heads - 07/08/2025 - 10am - 3pm Minjungbal Museum, 17 Kirkwood Rd, Tweed Heads South
- Casino - 01/08/2025 - 10am - 3pm Casino Community & Cultural Centre, 35 Walker St, Casino
- Ballina- 08/08/2025 - 10am - 3pm Jingi Wahla Rooms @ Ballina Surf Club, 65 Lighthouse Pde, Ballina

[Find more here](#)

## Australian Event Awards & Symposium

Delivered a standout event over the past year? Nominations are now open for the 2025 Australian Event Awards, recognising exceptional events held between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025. **Entries close 28 July 2025.**

[Enter here](#)

## TAFE NSW IAT Digital - Ballina

This AI made simple hands-on workshop cuts through the tech jargon to show small business owners exactly how to create their own AI helper in minutes, not months. This free face-to-face workshop will be held **9:30am - 12:30pm on 30 July 2025** in Ballina.

[Register here](#)

A green rectangular banner with the text "Sustainability Spotlight" in white. The banner has a slight 3D effect with a darker green shadow on the right side.

# Sustainability Spotlight





## Fast-Tracking Zero Emissions for Commercial Aviation

Australia's transport sector is the third-largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, contributing 21% to the nation's total emissions. Without urgent intervention, the transport sector is projected to be Australia's largest source of emissions by 2030.

Dovetail Electric Aviation is making ground-breaking strides in reducing Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by pioneering the development of electric-powered aircraft. The company has been awarded a \$3 million Cooperative Research Centres Project (CRC-P) grant. This will lead to the first certified electric propulsion and energy system in its category, a significant milestone in Australia's transition to zero-emission aviation.

[Learn more](#)

## Around the Region



## The Pass is the World's Best Beach

Lonely Planet's talented writers have travelled the globe in search of sublime, surf-pounded shorelines and remote pockets of hard-to-reach paradise that are worthy of featuring in Best Beaches: 100 of the World's Most Incredible Beaches.

The Pass in Byron Bay just took out the No. 1 spot on the list

[See the full list here](#)

**LOLA**

**LANEWAYS OF LISMORE ARTS FESTIVAL**

23 August / Carrington Street - Lismore CBD

Acts include: **MITCH TAMBO** **PAUL MCNEIL**  
**COOL SOUNDS** **MARTY BAPTIST**  
**EGGY** **FLO DJ'S**

REGIONAL arts AUSTRALIA Australian Government Regional Arts Fund Lismore City Council

**23 AUGUST**

**ART MUSIC FOOD**

## LOLA comes to Lismore

Lismore's iconic laneways will be transformed into a celebration of music, art, food and creativity on Saturday 23 August for the inaugural LOLA: Laneways of Lismore Arts Festival. Designed to attract locals and visitors from across the Northern Rivers and beyond, LOLA is a celebration of Lismore's thriving creative culture.

[More information here](#)



## 20 Years of Jetstar

This week marked 20 years since Jetstar's first flight landed at Ballina Byron Gateway Airport, the start of a successful partnership that has supported our local economy and connected more than five million passengers to and from the Northern Rivers. Since 2005, Jetstar has operated nearly 40,000 flights through Ballina, providing vital links to key destinations across Australia and international connections via Sydney and Melbourne.

[Read media release](#)

## North Coast Mud Trail

The North Coast Mud Trail is back for its 13th year, celebrating the region's vibrant ceramics community with a self-drive weekend event across the beautiful Northern Rivers.

Held on 16 and 17 August 2025, the event invites art lovers, collectors and curious adventurers to explore 22 open studios, featuring 33 local ceramic artists.

[Find more here](#)

## Beyond Jazz Weekender

Beyond Jazz Weekender, which runs 15-17 August at the Bellingen Memorial Hall, rekindles Bellingen's bohemian spirit as a jazz destination and invites audiences to embark on an adventure through eclectic music and dance experiences. No two shows are ever alike, as every gathering of jazz musicians becomes a high-wire act of spontaneous creation, where the musical magic unfolds in real time.

[Learn more](#)



# Product Development

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

[Submit here](#)

## Wattle - Crescent Head

Inspired by the quiet strength of Australia's national flower, Wattle's studio welcomes you exactly as you are, offering a place to reconnect, move, and simply be.

[Check it out](#)

## Shaws Bay Hotel - Ballina

The newly renovated Shaws Bay Hotel is Ballina's most iconic waterfront destination. A venue where you can enjoy dishes crafted from fresh and locally sourced ingredients, signature cocktails that seamlessly transition into sunset drinks and experience some of the best live music in the Northern Rivers.

[Check it out](#)

## Town Padel - Coffs Harbour

Padel is the sport everyone loves - easy to play, social, and addictive. A mix of tennis and squash, it's played on a smaller court with glass walls that keep the game fast and exciting

[Check it out](#)

## Salastraf - Arrawarra Headland

Escape to Salastraf, a stunning 3-bedroom retreat offering breathtaking views of the marine park and beach at Arrawarra Headland.

[Check it out](#)

# Grants & Funding

## 10 Strategic Grant Writing Tips

Business NSW's My Business offers a practical range of support and resources. One recent article offers 10 practical tips to help you across the grant lifecycle, including how to save time, make strategic decisions, and strengthen your proposals.

[Learn more](#)

## Looking for Grants?

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.

[Request a letter of support here](#)

## Transport Heritage Grant

This program aims to help the NSW community rediscover the culture, the events and the people that shaped transport in NSW over the past 170 years, as well as support the restoration and conservation of, and access to the valuable heritage assets (including buildings, rolling stock, vehicles, museum objects and collections). **Closes 1 August 2025**

[Apply](#)

## SRC Small & Vital

The Strengthening Rural Communities (SRC) Small & Vital grant gives small remote, rural and regional communities across Australia the opportunity to access funds for a broad range of initiatives that directly and clearly benefit local communities. There are two tiers of Small & Vital funding available. **Closes 17 September 2025**

[Apply](#)

# North Coast Events

### **Wardell River Festival**

Wardell 26 July 2025

### **Flowers and People – A Whole Year per Hour**

Yarrila Arts & Museum to 24 August 2025

### **Dirty Detour**

Monkerai 9 August 2025

### **International Tag Series**

Coffs Harbour 7-10 August 2025

Destination North Coast NSW, The  
Professional Centre Park Avenue, Level  
1/9 Park Avenue, Coffs Harbour, New  
South Wales 2450, Australia  
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