



Destination
North Coast NSW



Visitor Economy News

Image: Cape Byron Lighthouse, Courtesy of Destination NSW

Key Updates

APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN



Regional Night-Time Economy Program

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The NSW Government's Regional Night-Time Economy Program supports business collectives in regional towns to identify opportunities for vibrancy and deliver collaborative initiatives that grow their economies after dark.

Collectives of six or more local businesses can apply for grants of \$100,000 to \$200,000, including funding for a coordinator, and will have access to free capacity-building workshops.

If your town has untapped potential for more night-time vibrancy, connect with local businesses and apply by **2.00pm, Thursday 20 November 2025**.

[Learn more here](#)



Rising Number of Australians Seek Wellness Breaks

The Global Wellness Institute forecasts the global wellness economy to reach nearly \$9 trillion by 2028, while the 2025 Well Traveller Wellbeing Survey has found 56 per cent of Australians plan to take a wellness-focused holiday in the next 12 months.

New data from travel platform Traveloka also shows more Australians are seeking wellness breaks as a way to rest, recharge and prioritise well-being. Traveloka's 2024 'Travel Redefined' APAC study found 34 per cent of Australians cited 'rest and recharge' as their main reason to travel.

[Learn more here](#)



Live Music Drives Road- Tripping Growth

Research by East Coast Car Rentals has found live music is deeply tied to the travel experience for Australians. The research found that 73 per cent of Australians feel discovering local arts and music is a key part of their road trip experience. More than half even plan their travel around towns known for live music.

[Learn more here](#)



Best accommodation in NSW

The Star Ratings Gold List showcases the best hotels, motels, serviced apartments, caravan parks, hosted accommodation and self catering properties in each State.

Powered by millions of past guest ratings across hundreds of websites around the world, the Star Ratings Gold List is the ultimate form guide for your next holiday - because the accommodation you expect should be the accommodation you get.

Congratulations to the following North Coast businesses:

Hotels

[Harrington River Lodge](#) - Harrington

Serviced Apartments

[Boat House Resort](#) - Tea Gardens

[Sevan Apartments](#) - Forster

Hosted accommodation

[Jodha Bai Retreat](#) - Terranora

Motels

[Club Maclean Motel](#) - Maclean

Self Catering

[Clarendon Forest Retreat](#) - Possum Brush

[The Great Escape Lofts](#) - Gloucester

Caravan/Holiday Park

[Suffolk Beachfront Holiday Park](#) - Suffolk Park

[See the full list](#)



Connect to Country digital magazine - latest issue released

Issue 10 of **Connect to Country**, the digital magazine from Discover Aboriginal Experiences, is out now.

[Find more here](#)

Industry Insights

The rise of smart hotel rooms: balancing technology and human touch

The hospitality sector is currently experiencing a tech-driven evolution, with "smart hotel rooms" changing the very nature of the guest experience, from the initial booking right through to check-out. A study, the "2025 Hotel Room Insights" report (based on a survey of over 450 hotels globally), indicated that a significant 56% of hotels feel a persistent pressure to stay abreast of rapidly changing technology in order to adequately meet the evolving expectations of their guests.

It is becoming increasingly commonplace to find innovations such as smart lighting systems, AI-driven concierge services, and even technologically advanced bathrooms; however, this report emphasizes a particularly crucial point—the need to maintain a careful equilibrium between state-of-the-art technology and the irreplaceable "human touch" that guests still deeply appreciate.

[Read the report](#)

Industry Development

Destination NSW Inbound Strategy Workshop

The practical Inbound Strategy workshop is designed to provide visitor economy businesses with the necessary steps to develop and sell export-ready products to international visitors

via the inbound travel trade.

The Inbound Strategy workshop will suit visitor economy businesses, including accommodation, tours and activities, and visitor attractions including wineries, distilleries, breweries and farm gates that:

- Offer bookable experiences
- Have a presence in the domestic market, with at least one year of operational experience
- Are currently connected with or considering working with an online travel agent
- Are exploring opportunities in the international market

Date: Thursday 6 November 2025

Time: 10:00 - 15:00 (AEDT)

Location: Online - via Zoom (a link will be sent closer to the workshop date)

Cost: Registration is free

[Register here](#)

DNC Business Events Workshops

Join us for our Industry Workshops - Shaping Success Trends, Strategies & Bold Ideas, an interactive session for North Coast Business Events stakeholders.

- Discover current trends, innovative event concepts, and practical strategies to boost destination appeal and event success.
- Gain insights into sales best practice, client expectations, and how bold ideas can deliver results.
- Network, share ideas, and align on approaches that position our region as a competitive national player.

We'll wrap up with a brief **Q&A session**, providing an opportunity for you to ask questions, share insights, and connect directly with our Business Events team and other operators.

Our Collaboration for Success workshops delivered outstanding results last year, with operators actively building connections and forming valuable partnerships across the region. A great example of this spirit of collaboration is the Wine Trail, created through the joint efforts of Cassegrain Wines, Bago Winery, Long Point Vineyard, and Douglas Vale Homestead and Vineyard.

Duration: 2 hours

Format: In-person - various locations

Registration is free - Light refreshments included

We encourage all Business Event operators and industry partners to attend.

[Register here](#)

Famil trips for blind and low-vision travellers

Want to improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of tourism products and services in your region?

Sensory Tourism Australia is partnering with Cocky Guides in a new initiative taking blind and low-vision travellers on

Aboriginal Language Course Boosts Tourism and Jobs

High school students are getting a head start in the tourism industry through an Aboriginal language and culture course that links education, culture and career opportunities.

family trips and, they want to hear from regional tourism and local government organisations interested in participating.

[Find more here](#)

AgriFutures Rural Women's Award Applications Open

Applications are open for AgriFutures Rural Women's Award, Australia's leading award empowering and celebrating the inclusive and courageous leadership of women involved in Australia's rural and emerging industries, businesses, and communities.

If you're working on an existing project, business or program that is positively impacting rural and regional Australia, we encourage you to apply with successful applicants receiving up to \$35,000. Applications close 7th November 2025. .

[Find more here](#)

The NSW Department of Education's Aboriginal Language Pathways Program: Certificate I in Tourism (Aboriginal Indigenous Culture) helps students explore career pathways in the visitor economy while building leadership skills and strengthening cultural knowledge.

[Find more here](#)

Australia Next - 1-3 December 2025

Australia Next is Tourism Australia's signature incentive showcase, designed to increase awareness of Australia as an outstanding incentive destination.

The event provides the Australian business events industry the opportunity to connect with qualified incentive agents from around the world, while showcasing Australia's best incentive experiences and products.

[Find more here](#)

Sustainability Spotlight



2025 Tweed Sustainability Award winners

Nine inspiring individuals, schools, businesses and community groups have been recognised with a 2025 Tweed Sustainability Award for their outstanding efforts to protect and enhance the region's natural environment.

Held every 2 years, the Tweed Sustainability Awards celebrate the people and organisations making a meaningful difference to the Tweed's environment. This year, Council received 33 nominations across all categories, showcasing the depth of commitment to sustainability across the community.

[Read media release](#)

DNC Out & About



Australian Events Symposium - Coffs Harbour

Destination North Coast were in Coffs Harbour for the Australian Events Symposium that featured a great program with strong local support from the Coffs Coast Economic Development and Tourism team who led the site visits and facilitated both the symposium and awards gala, showcasing a few of the fantastic events venues in the region.

Our GM Michael Thurston spoke on the link between events and regional tourism, and DNC Board Member, Harry Barry shared insights on the decision-making process he follows while investing in venues and managing regulations and risk.

Around the Region

North Coast Hats in the Good Food Guide

Congratulations to the following North Coast restaurants awarded a hat or two in the latest SMH Good Food Guide:

Two Hats

[Bistro Livi](#) – Murwillumbah

[Pipit](#) – Pottsville

[Rae's Dining Room](#) – Byron Bay

One Hat

[Bar Heather](#) – Byron Bay

[Beach Byron Bay](#) - Byron Bay

Frida's Field - Nashua
Paper Daisy - Cabarita
You Beauty - Bangalow

[See the full list](#)

Product Development

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

[Submit updates here](#)

Drifter - Byron Bay

After successfully launching seven smaller stays along the east coast, boutique brand Drifter has opened its first full accommodation experience in Byron Bay.

[Check it out](#)

Sushi on Main - Alstonville

Located in the heart of Alstonville, Sushi on Main is your go-to spot for fresh, flavour-packed sushi and healthy grab-and-go options.

[Check it out](#)

Charcoal Bay - Ballina

Charcoal Bay offers exceptional catering services across Northern Rivers, NSW. Whether you're hosting a family gathering, corporate event, or special celebration, they bring the finest Brazilian BBQ and Aussie favourites to your occasion.

[Check it out](#)

Grants & Funding

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](#)

NSW Rugby League Infrastructure Investment Fund

This program seeks to provide financial assistance for all eligible Rugby League community clubs across the state, with the aim of supporting the upgrade and improvement of their respective club facilities and infrastructure. **Closes 3 November 2025**

[Find more here](#)

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](#).

Mylestom Mollusc Festival

Mylestom 8 November 2025

Wingham Music Festival

Wingham 21-23 November 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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