

## Visitor Economy News



Image: Nine Mile Beach, Tuncurry. Courtesy of Destination NSW.

## New News



Image: Destination North Coast.

### 2026 North Coast Tourism Symposium & Awards Gala: Tickets Now On Sale

Destination North Coast is excited to announce tickets are now officially on sale for the 2026 North Coast Tourism Symposium & Regional Tourism Awards, themed "From Vision to Visitor Ready: Distinctive Places, Shared Future" in Coffs Harbour from 29 to 30 July.

This year's must-attend industry event will bring together tourism leaders, innovators and operators for a Welcome Event on the evening of 29 July, followed by a full day of

Symposium insight, collaboration and inspiration on 30 July, culminating in the prestigious Regional Tourism Awards Gala that evening.

Grab your tickets now and be part of shaping the future of tourism on the North Coast!

### More Information & Tickets



*Image: Groovin The Moo. Courtesy of Great Southern Nights.*

## Lismore to host Groovin The Moo

After a two-year hiatus, *Groovin the Moo* has confirmed its return in 2026 with a one-off event to be held in Lismore on 9 May. The festival will adopt a single-day, single-stage format as part of a revised, more sustainable delivery model, reflecting broader shifts within the live events sector.

Supported by Great Southern Nights, the NSW Government and Destination NSW, the return of the festival represents a significant opportunity for the Northern Rivers visitor economy and signals renewed confidence in regional live events and reinforces the North Coast's position as a host for large-scale music and cultural experiences.

### Festival Information



Image: The Slim Dusty Centre, Kempsey. Courtesy of Destination New South Wales.

## NSW Unveils \$5.2M Plan for Regional Arts & Culture

The NSW Government has launched *Heartland: A Plan for Regional NSW Arts, Culture and Creative Industries 2026–2035*, backed by \$5.2 million to strengthen creative industries, support artists and grow cultural tourism across regional NSW.

The strategy outlines key priorities including championing First Nations culture, expanding touring and partnerships, supporting creative careers and activating regional spaces to drive long-term sustainability and economic impact.

[Read More](#)

**DNC Out & About**



*Image: Thunderbolts Way, Gloucester. Courtesy of Destination New South Wales.*

## **DNC Industry Networking Event**

The Destination North Coast Board is pleased to be hosting its March bi-monthly Board meeting on 25 March in Gloucester as part of our commitment to rotating meetings across the region. Following the meeting, we warmly invite local tourism operators and industry partners to join us for a relaxed evening of networking – an opportunity to connect with the Board, the DNC team and fellow industry peers.

**What: Evening Industry Networking**

**When: Wednesday 25 March 2026**

**Time: 5.00–7.00pm**

**Where: Avon Valley Inn**

RSVPs are essential by Thursday 19 March 2026. For catering purposes, please include any dietary requirements when responding. Please RSVP via email to [admin@dncnsw.com](mailto:admin@dncnsw.com)

We look forward to connecting with industry in region and spending the evening together in Gloucester.

**Around the Region**



*Image: Courtesy of Clarence Valley Council.*

## Clarence Valley Public Art Trail launched

The Clarence Valley Public Art Trail sees murals and public artworks transform Yamba, Maclean, Grafton, Glenreagh and beyond into open-air galleries. As the perfect excuse to rediscover local favourites or venture somewhere new, the Art Trail and can be paired with the Art Gallery and Museum Trail or the Lower Clarence Aboriginal Tourist Drive for a creative journey deeply connected to place.

[Explore The Art Trail](#)



*Image: Courtesy of Clarence Valley Council.*

## 2026 Plunge Arts & Culture Festival program out now

Clarence Valley Council has released the official program for the 2026 Plunge Arts & Culture Festival – a month-long celebration of creativity running throughout April and featuring more than 120 exhibitions, performances, workshops and hands-on events across the region.

[View The Program](#)

# Industry Insights

## Travel Pulse 2026: Strong Demand and Rising Spend

Travel booking platform Klook has released its *Travel Pulse 2026* report, which reveals strong travel intent, rising experience-led spending and a shift toward multi-destination journeys, with Asia Pacific travellers leading the way.

According to the study, 88 per cent of global travellers plan to increase or maintain their travel budgets in 2026. And Asia Pacific travellers have a 50 per cent higher intention to increase travel spend than those in Europe and the US.

[Read More](#)

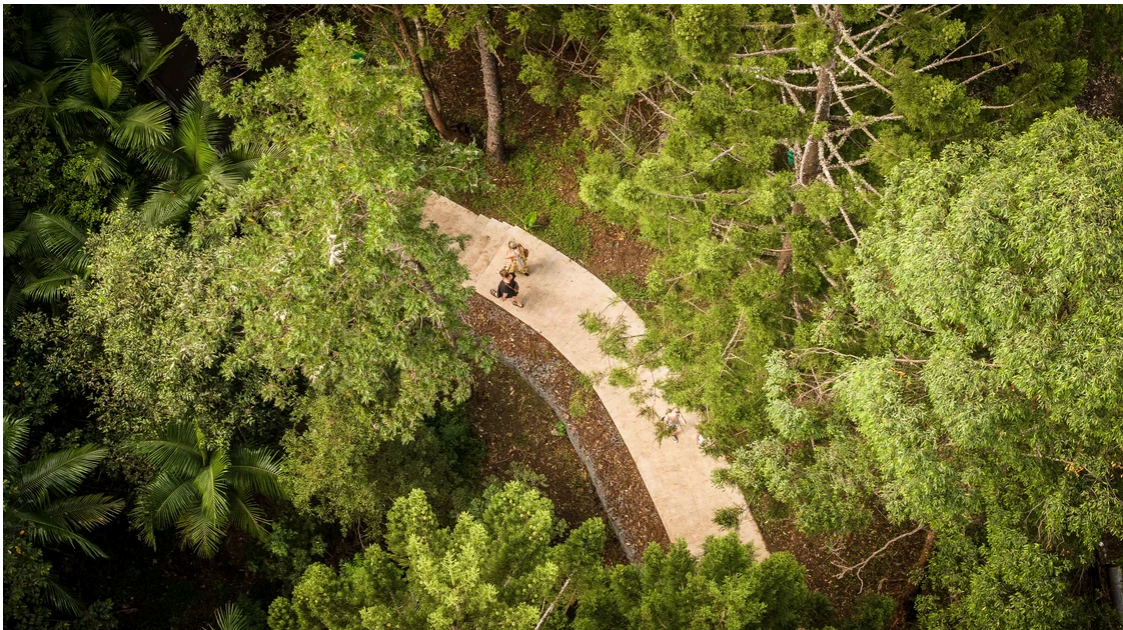
## 2026 Declared the Year of 'Weekending'

Airbnb's latest research shows that many Australians are *holiday-starved* from juggling work and life, and in 2026 are increasingly choosing short, spontaneous weekend getaways over long annual breaks to relax and recharge.

With most Aussies finding short trips less stressful and more enjoyable, this shift presents a big opportunity for regional destinations, local experiences and nearby escapes that make time-poor travellers feel truly refreshed.

[Read More](#)

# Sustainability Spotlight



*Image: Nimbin Rainbow Walk. Courtesy of Destination NSW.*

## NSW First: New nature-based tourism guide

Travellers are increasingly seeking memorable, sustainable experiences that immerse them in nature — from coastal and hinterland adventures to wildlife, wellness and stargazing. For

visitor economy businesses, this presents a valuable opportunity to diversify offerings, enhance sustainability credentials and appeal to a growing market of experience-led visitors.

The new NSW First Nature-based Tourism Guide outlines practical steps to help businesses identify opportunities, develop compelling nature-driven products and effectively share them with the market. The guide is part of the NSW First Program, delivered by Destination NSW to support visitor economy businesses to develop, promote and sell great experiences.

[Learn More](#)

## Industry Development

### **NSW Visitor Experiences: State of Play Webinar**

Destination NSW (DNSW) research partner FiftyFive5 will provide an industry update on the new DNSW experience research, including key insights into experiences appealing to NSW visitors, and an introduction to new resources available online and how to use them.

The webinar is targeted to NSW accommodation & experience providers, while destination marketing bodies and LGAs may also find the insights useful.

[Register Here](#)

### **Free Tourism Awards Writing Skills Workshop**

Port Macquarie Hastings Council is hosting free award writing workshops next month to help tourism operators master their Tourism Awards submissions.

Led by industry expert Cathy Treasure, the practical sessions will cover how to structure compelling entries and use the awards process to drive business growth, boost brand credibility.

[Register Here](#)

### **Be Bookable Online Aboriginal Experiences**

Applications are open for Be Bookable Online, which offers up to thirty (30) Aboriginal-owned businesses from across Sydney and regional NSW support to grow their business.

Each business will receive one-to-one mentoring to choose and set up the best online booking software for their needs, and listing set up assistance to sell online with up to three online travel agents (OTAs).

[Apply Now](#)

### **Partner Up! Event Sponsorship Masterclass**

Australian Centre for Regional Events is hosting an Event Sponsorship Masterclass where attendees will learn how to attract right-fit sponsors, craft a compelling hook, stand out in a crowded market, and build proposals that convert and keep sponsors coming back.

[Register Here](#)

# Product Development

Have a new product or experience (or just a great update on an existing product or experience) you'd like to tell us and DNSW about? **Submit it now via the link below.**

[Submit Here](#)

## Sunday Picnics at Elysian Hills

Enjoy a relaxed yet refined Sunday picnic at Elysian Hills – the perfect way to unwind, connect and soak in the hinterland views.

[Learn more >](#)

## Bower Camp Co. Yuraygir Walking Tours

Trek the magnificent Yuraygir Coastal Walk from Angourie to Wooli over five days, camping in comfort at four awe-inspiring locations.

[Learn more >](#)

## Dorrigo Rainforest Retreat

Enjoy eco-friendly accommodation near Dorrigo National Park, surrounded by farmland and rainforest-clad mountains.

[Learn more >](#)

# Grants & Funding

## Festivals Australia Grant - Funding Now Open

The Australian Government's Festivals Australia grant opportunity is now open, offering funding to support creative and cultural projects that strengthen regional and remote communities through arts, festivals and events.

[Apply Now](#)

## 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](#)

# 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](#).

**Kingscliff Triathlon:** Popular triathlon event attracting athletes of all levels to compete along the stunning Tweed coastline.

Kingscliff, 1 March 2026

[Learn more >](#)

**Ballina Duck Fest:** Community festival featuring the iconic duck race, live entertainment and family-friendly activities along the Richmond River.

Captain Cook Park - Ballina, 8 March 2026

[Learn more >](#)

**International Women's Day:** Global celebration recognising the achievements of women and advocating for gender equality across communities, workplaces and industries.

8 March 2026

[Check local listings](#)

**Bluesfest:** Iconic multi-day music festival celebrating world-class blues, roots and contemporary artists in the heart of the Northern Rivers.

Byron Bay, 2-5 April 2026

[Learn more >](#)

Destination North Coast NSW, The Professional Centre Park Avenue, Level 1/9 Park Avenue,  
Coffs Harbour, New South Wales 2450, Australia  
[Manage preferences](#)

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