



Hello industry friends,

As the Destination Southern NSW Board and team wind down for a short break over the festive season, we acknowledge the busy time ahead for tourism operators. We hope it's a prosperous time for all our hard-working industry friends and thank you for all you do to ensure visitors enjoy their time in our wonderful region.

Destination Southern NSW's GM, Richard Everson, expands on these sentiments and shares his reflection on the year that was. His message can be read in the **Destination Southern NSW News** section, along with information on events hosted and attended by the team and board, and an invitation for industry stakeholder feedback.

New products and events are showcased in the **Local News** section, along with more regional award-winner announcements. The **Industry Updates** section highlights a new policy designed to support the creative arts sector and resources to support small businesses.

The **Grants | Funding | Awards** section features more support for the arts, with information on funding for Regional Arts Touring.

Destination NSW is hosting a free 'Sell Online' webinar in February, and information about the University of Wollongong's business support program, Rise, can be found in the **Workshops | Webinars | Training** section.

Happy holidays,

The DSNSW Team

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# Destination Southern NSW

## Destination Southern NSW News



### **Where We've Been, What Lies Ahead**

December is the time of year when the unique nature of the tourism industry is highlighted. While everyone else is winding down and signing off, the sector is gearing up for what we all hope will be a great holiday season. But it is also a good opportunity to reflect on the year that was, and the future.

The team at Destination Southern NSW began the year with the launch of our Destination Management Plan. The departures of GM Sean Haylan, and Industry Development Manager (IDM) Alison Mead followed soon after. I joined the organisation in May, just in time to farewell departing board members Penny Spoelder and Wayne Kirkpatrick and retiring Chair Richard Beere. Kalina Koloff took over the Chair's role and Olivier Kapetanakos and Ian Stazicker joined Sarah McDougall as Board Directors. In July, Kylie Bushby joined the team as IDM Southern Tablelands, joining our highly efficient Communications Manager Tash Maguire and the indefatigable Jenny Robb, who has been looking after her patch as IDM South Coast and Snowies through all of this turbulence.

As we entered the last half of 2023, the board and team quickly settled into a productive rhythm, completing board meetings in Eden, Jindabyne and Young and

progressing some major projects including the Regional Cruise Industry business case, the Southern Tablelands Signage Strategy, and the MTB Hub, Feel New Alignment, and Value of Tourism projects. We look forward to sharing these projects with you soon.

Along the way, we had the pleasure of meeting with many of you - at industry events, at our Southern Yarns drop in sessions, and on site at your amazing businesses. Time spent with our industry operators is the highlight of our roles and we thank you for all that you do. You are the ones who welcome our visitors and deliver the 'once in a lifetime' experiences that make them fall in love with the region, tell their friends, post on their socials, and return again and again.

We recognise that it has been a tough year. We know there are many challenges on the horizon. But please, keep doing what you do so well. Take pride in your products and experiences, and the power you have to make someone smile. And know that as you emerge from another busy holiday season, the board and team from Destination Southern NSW will be waiting on the other side with a bunch of great resources and bags of energy, ready to work with you to make 2024 your best year yet.

On behalf of Chair Kalina; Directors Sarah, Ian, and Olivier; and our small but mighty team Jenny, Kylie and Tash, I wish you all the best for Christmas 2023 and the year ahead.

Richard Everson  
General Manager  
Destination Southern NSW

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Image: Industry stakeholders at Southern Yarns, Grove Estate, Young.

## Southern Yarns in Young

The Destination Southern NSW board and team enjoyed the opportunity to meet with industry stakeholders at [Grove Estate](#) in Young, to hear about regional challenges and discuss opportunities.

Thank you to everyone who attended 'Southern Yarns', it was great to see so many business owners, association members and of course our friends from Hilltops Council.

We are grateful to everyone who shared their insights, we look forward to working with you to address the challenges and leverage the opportunities.

**Save the date for our next Southern Yarns Event, which will be held in Cooma on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024, from 4.30 - 6.30pm.**

**Details, including venue to be confirmed.**



Image: Michelle Bishop, owner of Bangalay Luxury Villas at Shoalhaven Heads

## Minister for Tourism's South Coast Roundtable

Destination Southern NSW's General Manager, Richard Everson, travelled to The [Bay Pavilions](#) in Batemans Bay for a Ministerial Roundtable.

The event was hosted by local members [Ms Liza Butler MP](#) and [Dr Michael Holland](#). They were joined by the [NSW Minister for Tourism, The Hon. John Graham MLC](#), Destination NSW CEO Steve Cox and about 30 local tourism stakeholders from the Bega, Eurobodalla and Shoalhaven Local Government Areas.

Local industry operators leveraged direct access to the Minister by raising key issues impacting the region and presented a unified and positive approach to challenges and opportunities.

Several speakers highlighted the importance of contextual data, noting that the recent strong visitation and revenue figures are now being overtaken by the reality of declining spend and occupancy figures as cost-of-living pressures impact discretionary spend. The cohort suggested that access to real-time and predictive data would be beneficial to on-the-ground operators.

All who attended the event were grateful for direct access to the Minister. We raised key issues and highlighted the importance of the sector to the region.



## **Southern Tablelands Signage Strategy | Community Feedback**

As part of the Southern Tablelands Signage Strategy development project, several community and stakeholder consultations have been held across the region.

A questionnaire has been created to capture feedback from stakeholders who were not able to attend an in-person or virtual feedback session. As the consultation period draws to an end, we invite one last round of feedback which will be used to inform the development of the Strategy.

If you would like to provide feedback, please do so via [this survey](#), which will remain open until 5pm on the 15th Jan 2024.

Please visit the [Southern Tablelands Signage Strategy project page](#) on the Destination Southern NSW website for more information on the project.

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## Local News

Discover what's been happening across the tourism industry within the Destination Southern NSW network. To share news of your new product, experience or event, please email Tash via [comms@dsnsw.com.au](mailto:comms@dsnsw.com.au)



Image: Jill and Michael Bynon (centre) of Corang Estate with Toni Patterson MW, chair of judges (right), and Michael Archer of Dawning Day wines, MC (left), with the Trophy for Best Wine in Show.

Image credit - Australian Highlands Wine Show

## Best Wine in Show - Australian Highlands Wine Show

Congratulations to Jill and Michael Bynon of [Corang Estate](#) on multiple accolades awarded as part of the Australian Highlands Wine Show, including 'Trophy, Best Wine in Show, 2023 Australian Highlands Wine Show' for their Tumbarumba 2022 Chardonnay and 'Trophy, Best Red Blend in Show, 2023 Australian Highlands Wine Show' for the El Tinto 2022.



Image: Kane and Laura - Birchwood Jindabyne - Winners at the Restaurant and Catering Awards  
Image credit - Restaurant and Catering Industry Association of Australia

## Region Shines at Restaurant and Catering Awards

Congratulations to Birchwood Jindabyne, Tidal Restaurant and Wine Bar, and Merimbula Aquarium & Wharf Restaurant in Merimbula, and Kohli's Waterfront Indian Restaurant, Batemans Bay who have all been recognised as finalists or category winners at the 2023 NSW Restaurant & Catering Hostplus Awards for Excellence.

- [Birchwood Jindabyne](#) won the Cafe Dining and Casual Dining of the Year categories and was a finalist in the Breakfast Restaurant category.
- [Tidal Restaurant and Wine Bar in Merimbula](#) won the award for the Seafood Restaurant category.
- [Merimbula Aquarium & Wharf Restaurant](#) were finalists in the Family Dining category.
- [Kohli's Waterfront Indian Restaurant](#) were finalists in the Indian Restaurant category.

Congratulations to all of the teams supporting these businesses!! A full list of winners and finalists can be found [here](#).



Image: Aboriginal Cultural Tour - Image Credit: David Rogers

## New Cultural Experience - Sapphire Coast

[Navigate Expeditions](#) has launched a new cultural experience on the far south coast of NSW. Providing guests with a deep understanding of the strong connection Indigenous people have to Country, Navigate Expedition's new Aboriginal cultural tour on the Pambula River is designed to engender respect and appreciation and to

provide a new perspective on the surrounding landscape.

The 3-hour long Aboriginal Culture Kayak Tour, delivered in collaboration with Twofold Aboriginal Corporation, offers a journey into the heart of the coast's Indigenous heritage and offers insight into one of the oldest cultures on earth.

Find out more [here](#).

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### **New: Forest Bathing at Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens**

Congratulations to Phil Stubbs, a certified Nature and Forest Therapy Guide who has launched an exciting new offering, Forest Bathing, at the [Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden](#).

Forest Bathing, also known as Shinrin-Yoku, is a Japanese practice that involves mindfully connecting with nature. During the sessions, participants are guided through gentle walks and sensory activities that help them relax and restore well-being.

The walks are offered on the third Friday of the month, from 8am until 11am.

More information and bookings can be made [here](#).

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Image: SECCA - Archibald Exhibition 2023 - Image Credit: David Rogers

## **South East Centre for Contemporary Art**

The expanded South East Centre for Contemporary Art (SECCA) is now open to the public. The transformed art space has nearly doubled the size of the former Bega Valley Regional Gallery, creating a new cultural hub for the South East region.

The centre will open daily from 10am to 5pm, closing on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

More information is available via the [SECCA website](#).

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### **New Event: Stranded in the Snowys**

The inaugural Stranded in the Snowys in Summer festival will be held at Lake Crackenback Resort from February 12-16.

Featuring Jimmy Barnes, Richard Clapton, The Black Sorrows, Mahalia Barnes, Brooke McClymont and Adam Eckersley & Special Guests, the three-day live music event is strictly limited to 500 guests, providing an exclusive and intimate music festival experience.

More information is available [here](http://www.musicinparadise.com.au).

## Industry Updates

### **Overseas Arrivals - October**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has released its October 2023 arrivals data, which shows there were 607,930 short-term visitor arrivals to Australia, an annual increase of 177,460 trips.

New Zealand was the largest source country, accounting for 20 per cent of visitor arrivals for NSW (37,970 trips), followed by the United States (27,560) and the United Kingdom (19,220).

Read more [here](#).

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## Creative Communities Policy

The Minns government has unveiled details of Creative Communities, the new arts, culture and creative industries policy.

[Creative Communities](#) is a 10-year vision, the state's first creative industries policy, supporting the traditional arts sector and cultural institutions, encompassing industries informed by the state's unique and diverse cultural strengths.

The policy has the goal of sustainably growing the depth and breadth of creative industries throughout NSW, and over the next decade enabling creative individuals, organisations and communities throughout the state to reach their potential.

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## Sustainable Tourism Toolkit

Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade), Tourism Australia, state and territory governments and EarthCheck, a world-leading certification and advisory organisation for sustainable tourism, have released the Sustainable Tourism Toolkit.

The Sustainable Tourism Toolkit has clear and simple advice to help tourism businesses become more sustainable, including:

- why businesses should embrace sustainability
- taking a managed approach to sustainability
- respecting culture
- creating positive social impact
- environmental and climate action in tourism
- promoting a business's sustainability story.

Find out more via and download the guide [here](#).

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## Supply to Government

NSW Government departments and agencies can now spend up to \$250,000 directly with eligible small and medium businesses. This is an increase of \$100,000 from the previous maximum spend – delivering more government contracts for local businesses.

Additionally, businesses:

- no longer need to submit proof of insurance at the tendering stage – only after a contract has been awarded
- can submit and track e-invoices through the buy.nsw 'Supplier Hub'

- can apply for 'Faster Payments' to be paid within 5 business days. Find out more [here](#).

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## Safe Summer Travel

Holidaymakers are reminded to plan ahead and avoid peak travel times, for road trips with minimum stress this summer festive season.

Thousands of extra cars on the road will increase the risk of incidents. Using the [Live Traffic website](#) drivers can plan their driving route and avoid delays.

Additional tips include:

- avoid rushing,
- plan regular rest stops,
- service vehicles in advance,
- check the weather forecast, and
- allow for potential delays.

If loading the car, trailer, caravan, or boat for a trip, take the time to check everything is secure, all tyres and blinkers are in good condition, and drivers are across the rules around how to drive safely when towing.

See Transport for NSW's towing tips [here](#).

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## Grants | Funding | Awards

Please note that the grant and funding opportunities shared below are not administered by Destination Southern NSW. Please refer to the information provided on who to contact for guidance and support for each opportunity.

Destination Southern NSW may be able to provide a Letter of Support (LOS) for your project if it aligns with the [Southern NSW Destination Management Plan \(DMP\)](#).

Please contact the Industry Development Manager responsible for your region to discuss DMP alignment and if a LOS may be provided.

Jenny Robb – Industry Development Manager | South Coast and Snowies | [Jenny.Robb@dsnsw.com.au](mailto:Jenny.Robb@dsnsw.com.au)

Kylie Bushby – Industry Development Manager | Southern Tablelands | [kylie.bushby@dsnsw.com.au](mailto:kylie.bushby@dsnsw.com.au)

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## Regional Arts Touring Funding

Regional Arts Touring funding supports tours that provide access to arts and culture for audiences living in regional NSW.

Provided by Create NSW, the funding is available for tours of all art forms, including performing arts, music, visual arts, literature, history, museums and multi-arts.

Applicants should demonstrate strong audience development and engagement strategies.

The grant amount varies per tour, with the project objectives designed to:

- provide people in regional NSW with access to a high-calibre and diverse range of artistic and cultural experiences, no matter where they live.
- support best practice programming in regional and rural facilities.
- build audiences by encouraging and promoting regional and local support for arts and culture.
- build the viability of NSW arts and cultural organisations by developing new markets and audiences.

This program is administered by Create NSW and the Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade.

**Application closes 26 February 2024, 5:00 pm**

Find out more [here](#).

**Grant Search**

## Workshops | Webinars | Training

### Sell Experiences Online

Join [Destination NSW](#) for a free, half-day Sell Online virtual workshop and find out how to increase bookings through online sales – both direct and indirect – by using online booking software, creating effective ATDW-Online listings, and working with online travel agents (OTAs) to grow online visibility.

**Date: 6 February 2024**

**Time: 10:30 - 14:30 (45-minute lunch break included)**

**Location: Online via Zoom**

The Sell Online virtual workshop will suit visitor economy businesses, including accommodation, tours and activities, and visitor attractions including museums, galleries, wineries, distilleries, breweries and farm gates that offer bookable experiences.

Find out more and register [here](#).

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### Leveraging Technology

In February 2024, the Centre of Excellence will be presenting a roadshow of workshops with Bart Sobies on Leveraging Technology for Tourism and Hospitality businesses.

The key topics for the session include:

The Power of Technology in Tourism  
Tech Solutions for Streamlining Operations  
Enhancing Customer Experience via Technology

**Dates and venues:**

[Merimbula | Club Sapphire | Monday 19th February 2024, 9-11am](#)

[Narooma | Club Narooma | Tuesday 20th February 2024, 9-11am](#)

[Ulladulla | Ulladulla Civic Centre | Wednesday 21st February 2024, 9-11am](#)

[Nowra | Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre | Thursday 22nd February 2024, 9-11am](#)

Find out more and register through the links above.

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## iAccelerate - Rise Program

The [University of Wollongong](#)'s iAccelerate [Rise program](#) supports new and existing regional businesses with practical workshops, online learning and a network of experts to help businesses grow and scale.

In 2024 the Rise program will focus on business in several key industries:

- \* Fisheries and Aquaculture
- \* Advanced manufacturing
  - \* Circularity
  - \* Ecotourism
- \* High-quality food production

Each program will be delivered at a hub in regional NSW with businesses across the state also able to join virtually.

Find out more and express interest [here](#).



**Destination Southern NSW Ltd is supported by the NSW Government and Destination NSW**

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Banner Image Credit: Potoroo Palace, Merimbula, an educational and conservation wildlife sanctuary  
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