



TOURISM AWARDS

Pride ♦ Strength ♦ Community ♦ Passion

Meet Our 2025 Judges





Ron Beeldman

CHAIR OF JUDGES

2025

Ron Beeldman serves as Chair of Judges, bringing more than 50 years of successful and rewarding experience in the education, co-ordination, supervision, and marketing of diverse programs in the travel, hospitality, and special events sectors. His career highlights include significant involvement in the development and administration of the inaugural Regional and New South Wales Tourism Awards in the 1990s, helping to establish a legacy of celebrating excellence across the state.

Throughout his career, Ron has held senior leadership, training, and advisory roles, shaping industry standards and inspiring those entering the sector. His work has been marked by a commitment to quality, innovation, and professionalism, ensuring tourism continues to be a strong contributor to both economic growth and community vitality. As Chair of Judges, Ron applies his deep knowledge, fair judgement, and passion for the industry to uphold the highest standards of integrity, ensuring that every award recognises truly outstanding achievement.



Our judges bring decades of experience across tourism, hospitality, business, and marketing. Experts in destination marketing, business development, hospitality management, grant writing, and sustainable tourism, they combine regional and international industry knowledge. From award-winning entrepreneurs to seasoned professionals, their diverse expertise ensures a fair, insightful judging process. United by a passion for excellence, they are dedicated to recognising the very best in NSW tourism.

MEET THE JUDGES



Margaret Shannon

VICE CHAIR OF JUDGES

Margaret is a dedicated and experienced professional with a proven track record in tourism management and business development, and demonstrated success in operational management, strategic planning and marketing.

Margaret brings over 20 years' experience in the hotel, cruise and caravan industry and is a director on the National Caravan and Camping Industry Association and Destination North Coast boards. In 2022 she was named Myall Lakes Woman of the Year in recognition of contribution to regional tourism.

Margaret has developed a reputation for tourism excellence, regional advocacy and innovative marketing and product development; driven by a passionate commitment to the tourism industry and community.



Lori Modde

VICE CHAIR - NSW TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Lori is a seasoned professional with over 30 years of experience in community and economic development. She has held pivotal roles, including Regional Marketing Manager at Tourism NSW and Senior Manager of Place Activation at Sydney Olympic Park Authority. Through her company, Lorick Management, Lori has managed major tourism events and organisations.

Lori is the Project Manager for Sturt's Steps in Outback NSW, CEO of Outdoors NSW & ACT and General Manager of Visitor Economy Development. Lori is a dedicated mentor and volunteer, actively involved in several industry associations and has received numerous accolades for her contributions.



Lisa Campbell

INTERNAL AUDIT - AWARDS ADVISOR

With nearly 25 years of experience as a judge for tourism awards, including the ACT, NSW and Australian Tourism Awards, Lisa has also served as Chair, Auditor, and Awards Advisor for the NSW Tourism Awards.

Over a 35-year career across Australia and Europe, she has contributed to a broad range of sectors within the tourism industry. Her expertise now extends to training and development across government, academic, and private organisations. Lisa currently holds an operations role with a national company, specialising in training delivery and support.



Andrew Gray

Andrew Gray is a leader in Australia's creative and cultural industries, with over 30 years' experience in strategic planning, cultural tourism, and community-focused projects. As Executive Director of South East Arts, he transformed the regional arts landscape, delivering major events like the Headland Writers Festival and Giiyong Festival, securing significant funding, and building lasting partnerships.

Andrew's career includes roles with national cultural institutions, developing award-winning programs that made culture accessible to diverse audiences. A skilled mentor and advisor, Andrew supports creative businesses, not-for-profits, and practitioners across screen, heritage, music, theatre, and First Nations cultural experiences, fostering innovation and sustainable growth.



Ashley Gray

Ashley has a background in brand marketing and content creation, shaped by her work with global brands such as Red Bull, where she specialised in storytelling, partnerships, and creative campaigns.

Now with Destination North Coast, and previously in local government, she focuses on industry engagement, capacity building and visitor economy development. Ashley plays a key role in delivering the North Coast Destination Management Plan 2022–2030, supporting initiatives that showcase the region's strengths and values. Passionate about collaboration, she works closely with tourism operators to create unique, place-based experiences that enrich visitor journeys while delivering positive outcomes for local communities.



Belinda Thomas

Belinda brings over 25 years of experience in regional tourism, having held executive roles including CEO at Holidays at Hampshire Property Group and General Manager of Business Development at BIG4 Holiday Parks Australia. She has also contributed to the broader industry through her role as a board member of Australian Regional Tourism (ART).

Belinda's background spans operations, customer experience, training, and strategic leadership, with a strong focus on innovation and data-driven growth. Belinda is dedicated to celebrating excellence and championing local operators, helping ensure visitors enjoy diverse, authentic, and memorable experiences across regional communities in NSW and beyond.





Candice Clark

Candice Clark is a seasoned leader in tourism, events, and visitor experience, with over a decade of expertise spanning government, infrastructure, and industry sectors. Currently Experience Centre & Events Manager at Western Sydney International Airport, she delivers high-profile activations, stakeholder engagement, and strategic visitor programs.

Candice is known for her ability to lead complex projects, manage large-scale events, and foster meaningful community and industry connections. With a strong focus on safety, innovation, and customer experience, she brings valuable insight and a collaborative spirit to the judging panel, supporting the continued growth and excellence of the tourism sector.



Carol Giuseppi

Carol has had a 40-year career as a senior business professional, with a strong marketing and strategic business background. Commencing her marketing and tourism career with British Airways, previous appointments included senior roles with Accommodation Australia, Tourism Accommodation Australia, Amber Group Australia, Sydney Olympic Park Authority, Fox Studios, Southern Pacific Hotels and American Express.

Carol has an Executive MBA, a Masters of Business (Marketing) and a Diploma of Market Research and is a graduate of the Institute of Company Directors.



Carolyn Jane Childs

Carolyn Childs' passion is empowering travel organisations to thrive into the future. Her career spans 35+ years & 35+ countries with roles at Travel Research Centre, the International Air Transport Association & TNS (now Kantar).

Carolyn is a top-rated speaker and published author on travel markets and trends. In 2025 she will be joining place-making consultancy SHP as Director of Tourism.





Cicely Sylow

Cicely is an experienced Director and General Counsel with leadership and organisational experience across a diverse number of industries.

Cicely has extensive experience in leadership, governance, strategic advice, complex commercial transactions, acquisitions, construction, developments, stakeholder engagement (including government), asset development, sustainability, and organisational performance.

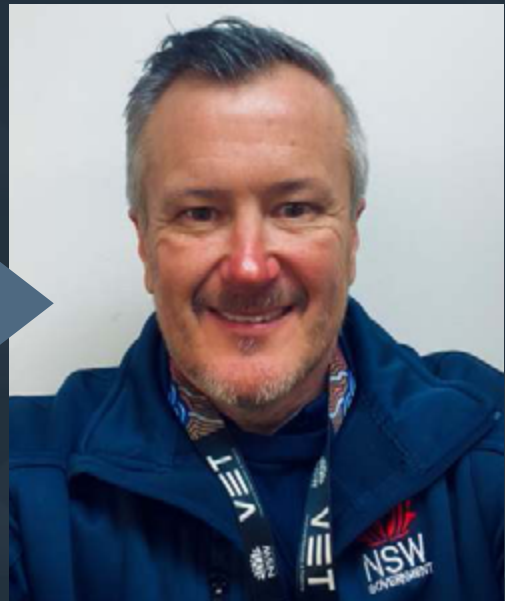
Key contributions include managing multi-stakeholder engagement and regulatory requirements, providing strategic direction based on macro and micro market dynamics and trends, and identifying opportunities.



Craig Slavek

Craig is a passionate traveller, both within Australia and internationally, who values experiencing excellence across a wide range of sectors.

He takes great satisfaction in seeing individuals achieve exceptional success in their chosen fields and regards the opportunity to help identify and celebrate those who rise to the very top as a genuine honour and privilege.



Dave Campbell

Dave is a creative director, entrepreneur, and consultant with expertise in hospitality, tourism, and startups. He developed a consultancy network supporting primary producers to grow product value through creative strategies and planning.

As an Executive Chef, Dave has worked in London, New York, Los Angeles, and Australia, and founded four restaurants in Sydney and the South Coast, boosting tourism. He now works in the club industry and serves on the boards of Destination Sydney Surrounds South and Narooma Rocks. He enjoys time in the ocean, rivers, and mountains.





Deanna Varga

CEO & Founder of Mayvin Global, Deanna has worked in tourism and business events for over 25 years. Deanna has held roles in several organisations including Australian National Maritime Museum, Tourism Australia (Business Events Australia), Business Events Sydney (then SCVB) and global hotel chains. Deanna's company works on strategic tourism projects for organisations such as Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, Laissez-faire Catering, Destination Sydney Surrounds South, NSW NPWS, AGB Creative, Central Coast Council, Singleton Council and Dubbo Regional Council.

Deanna is been an Adjunct Associate Professor (Industry) with UTS for her services to tourism and business events, serves on the Asia Pacific Regional Advisory Board of the Professional Convention Management Association and is an international lecturer and author for the International Congress and Convention Association.



Edwina Bartholomew

Edwina has more than 20 years' experience in media, spanning television, radio, and print. She is best known as the news presenter on Channel Seven's Sunrise, where she has become a trusted and familiar presence to audiences across Australia.

Alongside her media career, Edwina is a passionate advocate for regional NSW and is actively involved in the tourism and hospitality sector. She owns and operates two distinctive accommodation properties: Warramba, a luxury retreat in the Capertee Valley, and Saltash Farm in Carcoar, currently under construction. Her work reflects a strong commitment to excellence, storytelling, and celebrating regional experiences.



Elyss Larkham

Based in Port Stephens, Elyss is a passionate tourism professional with over 20 years' experience across the visitor economy. She has held roles in sales, marketing, business development, and events with well-regarded regional operators including Oakvale Wildlife Park and Moonshadow-TQC Cruises.

In 2025, Elyss launched EDL Consulting to support tourism operators with strategic growth, market development, and mentoring. Known for her strong industry connections and practical, outcomes-focused approach, Elyss is passionate about helping operators thrive and proud to contribute to the NSW Tourism Awards as a judge.





Emilie Howe

Emilie Howe, originally from Tasmania and now based in Sydney, has a deep passion and extensive experience in the tourism industry. As the inaugural CEO of Visitor Experience Training (VXT) in Tasmania, she led the enhancing the state's tourism standards through comprehensive training services and extensive collaboration with stakeholders.

Emilie is currently the General Manager of eeger, a dedicated online platform for Careers, Training and Industry information for the Tourism, Hospitality and Travel industries. Emilie has travelled widely across Australia, enriching her understanding of regional tourism. She served as a judge for the Tasmanian Tourism Awards from 2021 to 2023, the NSW Tourism Awards in 2024 and the NSW Top Tourism Town 2025.



Eric Sward

With more than 20 years' experience in the tourism industry, Eric has built a strong track record in hotel, motel, apartment, and resort management, overseeing both individual properties and multi-site operations. His career includes the planning, opening, and marketing of major tourism products, as well as extensive experience in preparing award submissions and funding applications.

A long-serving board member of several tourism industry organisations, he has held roles including Treasurer, Vice President and President, and is a Life Member. Eric's formal qualifications include multiple business leadership and management programs, two TAFE Diplomas, and two Master's degrees from Macquarie University.



Erin Kramer

Erin's journey began at Tourism Australia, followed by impactful roles at Club Med, Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours and Viking Cruises as both Trade & Consumer Marketing Manager.

Now the Co-Founder of Travel Marketers, she possesses 15+ years of travel industry experience. Travel Marketers, with its expertise, crafts tailored marketing plans, aiding tourism industry clients in refining existing strategies or creating comprehensive new ones for business growth.





Fazila Farhad

With a degree in Economics from University College London, Fazila has built a diverse career spanning banking, marketing, product management, business development, hotel ownership and destination management. For over 20 years, she has managed and operated leading hotel brands, including Crowne Plaza, Ibis Styles, and Ramada Hotels & Suites, gaining extensive hands-on experience in hospitality and tourism.

A founding board member of the Western Sydney Tourism Taskforce, Fazila has worked closely with councils, industry stakeholders, and Western Sydney International Airport to drive regional tourism growth. Recognised through multiple industry award nominations, she continues to mentor emerging leaders and champion visitor economy development.



Hanna Marshall

Hanna Marshall is the Tourism Manager at Merimbula Tourism Inc, where she leads destination marketing and drives growth for the regional visitor economy. With a strong background in tourism, hospitality and small business operations, she brings expertise in project management, stakeholder engagement and brand development.

Hanna has built a robust network across the NSW tourism industry and is passionate about community-driven initiatives that support local operators. Her entrepreneurial spirit, strategic mindset, and deep understanding of regional challenges make her a thoughtful and dynamic judge, dedicated to recognising excellence and innovation in tourism across the state.



Ian Mason

An 11-year judge, Ian Mason has a passion for regional tourism, with vast experience within local government and regional tourism organisations across Victoria and Queensland. Ian has held tourism roles such as Destination Development Lead, Marketing and Media Manager, Visitor Centre Manager, Visitor Services Manager and Tourism Lead, and managed the Sarina Sugar Shed in Queensland for 4 years.

Ian has sat on various tourism committees and boards, including Australian Regional Tourism, and holds a Masters in Communications and Bachelor of Business (Tourism Management). He is also a certified trainer and assessor, working in locations like Abu Dhabi and Shanghai.





Ivy Caruth

Originally from the Deep South of the United States and now based in Sydney for more than 13 years, Ivy is a travel writer whose work has taken her from tracking poachers in South Africa to Buddhist-led calligraphy meditations in remote Zhoushan, China, and many places in between.

Ivy's writing focuses on forging connections between people and places, shaped by a spirit of curiosity and adventure. She has eaten unusual meals, slept amongst crocodiles, and mastered the art of the packing cube. When not travelling, Ivy enjoys Pilates, spending time with dogs, and savouring buttercream icing straight from the spoon.



James (Buck) McFarlane

James "Buck" McFarlane left his career as a product manager in financial services in 2008 to pursue his passion for travel, beginning as a tour guide. After a decade in the youth tourism sector, he discovered his purpose in accessible and inclusive tourism, founding Cocky Guides in 2018. The company delivers destinations differently, creating tailored travel experiences for blind and low-vision travellers—an audience often underserved in the global visitor economy.

Buck's work has redefined inclusivity in tourism, combining innovation and empathy to ensure that memorable, meaningful travel experiences are accessible to all, regardless of vision impairment.



Jamie Angus

An experienced executive leader with a passion for regional development, tourism, and cultural innovation. As Chief Operating Officer at 123 Tix, Jamie drives digital transformation in event ticketing, building on a career leading significant tourism and cultural initiatives across NSW.

Jamie has managed high-profile cultural and heritage assets, including strategic lead for Old Dubbo Gaol, Wellington Caves, and the Western Plains Cultural Centre. Over 16 years in Local Government, Jamie has delivered success in grant writing, business development, and infrastructure planning, and holds AICD credentials. He brings a rare blend of strategic insight, operational excellence, governance capability, and regional advocacy.





Jan Kerr

With more than 40 years' experience in the tourism industry, Jan has owned and operated a small family business and contributed extensively to regional tourism development. She co-founded the Canowindra International Balloon Challenge in 2010, managing media, marketing, the Balloon Glow event, and all grant and award submissions for a decade before retiring in 2019.

A judge at regional, state, and North Coast Tourism Awards for over 10 years, she has served as submission, site, and lead judge, mentoring entrants throughout the process. Jan has also been a member of the Cabonne Tourism Advisory Committee and held senior roles with the Country Women's Association of NSW.



Jennie Curran

Jennie is the CEO of the Hunter Valley Wine & Tourism Association, representing one of Australia's most well known wine and food regions. With a background in destination marketing in NSW in the Hunter Valley and Orange, wine tourism, visitor economy strategy and tourism leadership, Jennie works closely with industry, local and state government and stakeholders to drive sustainable growth and high-quality visitor experiences.

A passionate advocate for regional tourism, Jennie brings a deep understanding of the sector's challenges and opportunities.



Jenny Robb

Jenny is the Industry Development Manager for Destination Southern NSW, working across the South Coast and Snowy Mountains regions. A former small nature-based tour operator, she gained first-hand insight into the challenges and rewards of running a regional tourism business. Her career has equipped her with a deep understanding of what it takes for a business to stand out, create exceptional visitor experiences, and inspire lasting memories.

Jenny believes business owners must strive for excellence—mediocrity has no place in today's competitive tourism landscape—and is committed to helping operators deliver meaningful, joyful experiences that visitors will share and remember.





Jenny-Lee Scharnboeck

Jenny-Lee Scharnboeck is a passionate advocate for sustainable tourism and community engagement, currently serving as Chief Executive Officer at Take 3 for the Sea. With over two decades of experience across government, tourism, and environmental sectors, she brings deep insight into visitor economy dynamics and environmental stewardship.

Jenny-Lee has led initiatives such as the Ground Swell program, empowering tourism operators to reduce visitor litter and protect natural assets. Her leadership has helped embed litter prevention as best practice across NSW's tourism industry. As a judge for the 2025 NSW Tourism Awards, she champions innovation, responsibility, and excellence in tourism.



Jodie Heaton

Jodie brings 25 years' experience as a senior executive in fashion retail, where she led large teams across Australia and New Zealand, drove results, and developed new businesses through extensive global travel. Her work included attending trade fairs and implementing best practices from leading organisations worldwide.

Transitioning into banking and finance, she has spent the past 12 years as a Senior Lending Specialist in mortgage lending. Jodie's diverse background reflects a passion for leadership, a commitment to excellence, and an ability to foster growth in dynamic environments.



John Goddard

John currently leads an advisory firm 'Better Managers' and chairs a CEO group of 16 business owners based in Sydney. He recently completed a doctorate through research focused on business practices proven to increase owner-manager and business performance using action learning and communities of practice methods.

Previously John has held engineering, consulting, sales management and CEO roles in organisations including BOC, Coopers & Lybrand, Hewlett Packard, Telstra and Rockend. John is a fellow of the Australian Institute of Managers and Leaders, hold a BSc (Hon) Industrial Engineering, MA in research and a DBA (in examination).





Julie Stewart

Julie Stewart is the Airport Manager at Ballina Byron Gateway Airport with over 40 years' experience in tourism, hospitality, and aviation. She has led major infrastructure upgrades, including a \$20 million runway project, and fostered key partnerships with many of Australia's domestic airlines.

A board director for Destination North Coast, Julie is also a respected tourism awards judge, known for her expertise and commitment to regional development. Her leadership continues to enhance connectivity, support tourism growth, and drive economic outcomes for the Northern Rivers region.



Karina Groth

Karina has over two decades of experience as a business consultant specialising in the tourism industry. Karina carved a niche for herself as a specialist in grant and bid preparation and award writing and business mentoring services.

Karina has held senior management roles within regional and local tourism organisations, the inbound and retail sectors and is a specialist facilitator on a wide variety of topics. Karina has been privileged to be a judge on the Australian Tourism Awards and various specialist industry awards.



Katrina Denoux

Katrina has over two decades of experience in tertiary education, well-being, agri-tourism, heritage, and sustainability, & an Ambassador for Regional Tourism Australia. Currently a Learning Teaching & Innovation Manager, she develops university programs and leads educational innovation in assessment quality in business, tourism, hospitality & event management degrees.

With a background in clinical nutrition and gastronomy tourism (Le Cordon Bleu), Katrina has held senior roles in healthcare and hospitality, co-founding Resource Environmental Solutions, a recycling initiative operating globally. Her tourism venues have earned TripAdvisor Certificates of Excellence and maintain Airbnb SuperHost status. Katrina enjoys hiking, foraging and transformational travel.





Keith Baker

Keith's career in tourism, business and government spans many aspects of the industry at the local, regional and state levels for over 30 plus years. He has extensive experience in working with organisations and community groups to develop destination and place-based solutions.

Keith has a Bachelor of Business (Tourism) and a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. Keith has represented industry and community groups at conferences and events in Australia and overseas and has been a guest lecturer in tourism and planning at Western Sydney University and has been Chairperson of it's External Advisory Committee for the Sustainable Tourism, Hospitality and Events Management programs.



Laura Jensen

Growing up on Norfolk Island, reliant on tourism, Laura developed a deep appreciation for its role in enriching communities, supporting local economies, and creating positive holiday experiences. As Marketing Manager for NRMA Parks and Resorts, she champions regional NSW towns—showcasing their unique offerings and helping create lasting memories for visitors.

Driven by a passion for growing businesses and tourism economies, Laura combines strategic insight with a results-focused approach. Having written award-winning submissions for state and national levels, she understands the dedication behind them and is motivated by a genuine love for the industry, celebrating its excellence and impact across NSW.



Lewis Belling

Lewis Belling is Sector Development Coordinator at the City of Coffs Harbour, bringing a fresh focus to economic development and tourism within his local community. With 16 years' experience in the golf and hospitality industries, Lewis gained extensive global exposure and valuable skills before transitioning in 2023 to serve public sector priorities.

Lewis is committed to continuous growth as a colleague, manager, leader, and mentor. Passionate about sustainable tourism and stakeholder engagement, Lewis combines his background with a dedication to fostering community-focused development.





Lyndel Gray

Lyndel is an experienced Chair and Non-Executive Director with over 30 years experience in tourism and leisure industries working across international and domestic markets. During her long career she held executive leadership roles at prominent tourism entities including NSW Caravan and Camping Industry Association, Destination NSW, Tourism NSW and Tourism Australia.

In recognition of her significant contribution, Lyndel was awarded Outstanding Contribution by an individual at 2024 NSW Tourism Awards. Lyndel is currently Chair of Destination Sydney Surrounds South, and a member of the Board at Reflections Holidays and Surfing NSW.



Mark Wayper

Mark is a digital marketing specialist with a strong background in the hospitality and tourism industry, having worked with leading global brands including Accor and Minor Hotels. He enjoys developing smart, effective digital strategies, building compelling brand stories, and delivering high-impact marketing campaigns.

From enhancing website performance to driving strong online engagement, Mark combines creative thinking with commercial focus. Holding a Master of Business in Marketing, he blends strategic insight with hands-on experience to help hotel brands grow their web presence and deliver real results.



Michelle Braiuka

Michelle Braiuka is a passionate advocate for regional NSW, bringing over 20 years of experience in tourism, events, and stakeholder engagement. With a deep understanding of regional dynamics, she has worked across government and industry to support the visitor economy and promote sustainable tourism.

Michelle collaborates closely with local operators, councils, and communities to champion grass-roots initiatives and build long-term capacity. A returning judge for tourism and industry awards, she is committed to recognising excellence and innovation across the sector. Michelle's work celebrates the unique stories, landscapes, and producers that make regional NSW a world-class destination.





Nicola Billens

With over a decade in luxury travel sales and marketing, Nicola Billens brings unparalleled insight into premium tourism experiences for ultra-high-net-worth travellers. She has worked across every facet of the tourism industry—from luxury lodges and inbound operators to digital marketing and trade representation.

As founder of Elixir Journeys and Elixir Premium Experience Design, Nicola helps shape the future of high-end travel through both direct product delivery and industry education. A graduate of ATEC's ELITE program and the TIME and Transformation Travel initiatives, she also led PURE Pursuits Australia and contributes to innovative projects such as Wilderluxe Lake Keepit.



Nicole O'Donnell

Nicole O'Donnell is an accomplished event management executive with over 20 years' experience delivering high-profile national and international events, programs, and projects. Her expertise spans NSW tourism initiatives, policy launches, and awards, including managing the NSW Tourism Awards and launching the inaugural NSW Top Tourism Town Awards in 2021.

Nicole has played a key role in prestigious events such as the 10th World Chambers Congress and the Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games. Known for her strategic leadership and stakeholder engagement, she excels at coordinating diverse teams and partners across government, industry, and business to deliver impactful, world-class experiences.



Robyn Johnson

Robyn Johnson is a highly regarded leader in Australia's tourism and events industry, with over 20 years of experience in strategic development and industry engagement. She has held prominent roles including CEO of Meetings & Events Australia and General Manager Event Delivery at Business Events Sydney.

As the founder of award-winning Conexion Event Management, Robyn is known for her innovative approach and commitment to excellence. More recently, she has worked with local businesses to develop tourism products and support regional growth. Robyn also serves as Vice Chair of the Australian Respiratory Council and contributes actively to several industry committees.



Robyn Willis Inglis

Robyn has been a dedicated professional in travel, tourism, and hospitality since the 1970s, with a strong emphasis on industry education through roles at Travelscene American Express, Helloworld, AFTA Education (now ATIA), and the Australian Travel Careers Council. Her Honorary roles include being a member of the Australian Travel Training Review Panel, a founding committee member of the Travel Industry Careers Association, involvement with mentoring with TIME, is a judge for the NTIA Awards and is a member of SKAL.

With over 10 years as a judge and lead judge for the NSW Tourism Awards, Robyn is committed to advancing industry professionalism and enhancing the visitor experience.



Sarah McDougall

Now in her second year as a judge, Sarah brings extensive experience in tourism development and marketing communications, with a strong emphasis on regional growth. As a Board Member of Destination Southern NSW and Director of Springbank Co, she has spent over a decade delivering creative, results-driven strategies across retail, small business, and the wine sectors.

Sarah's background in the wine industry fuels a deep passion for promoting regional wine tourism and engaging local communities. Sarah is committed to fostering sustainable outcomes through collaboration and innovation, supporting initiatives that drive meaningful impact across New South Wales' diverse tourism landscape.



Sarah Rhodes

Sarah is a sustainability consultant for hotels and the tourism sector, she helps hotels reduce single-use plastics, improve the sustainability of their operations across all ESG areas and achieve a measurable impact to protect our blue planet. She works across various certification schemes supporting businesses to attain recognition with Blue Standard, Travelife, BCorp, Ecotourism Australia and GSTC for Hotel and Tour Companies.

Sarah also works for the Ecolabel, GECA supporting businesses in gaining certification for Green Building recognition and volunteers on the Mosman Council Climate Action Committee, as a judge for the NSW Tourism Awards and Chapter Lead for Travel Massive, Sydney.





Shan Lawson

Shan has been involved with the NSW Tourism Awards since 2003. First as Program Coordinator for 8 years, taking the program from paper-based to online. She was then a judge for the Mid North Coast Tourism Awards.

Shan has been a mentor for the NSW and Tasmanian Tourism Awards and continues to volunteer her time to judge the NSW Awards. Shan enjoys helping people through life coaching and lives near beautiful Lake Macquarie with her two dogs and two cats.



Sharen Nisbet

Dr. Sharen Nisbet is an experienced academic and industry collaborator with a strong foundation in tourism, hospitality, and gaming. Her interdisciplinary work now spans organisational culture, transformation and governance across a range of business types and industries.

Sharen is deeply committed to higher education excellence, with a proven track record in curriculum design, experiential and work-integrated learning initiatives that connect students with real-world industry challenges. She brings insight, innovation, and a passion for people to every project, shaping future-ready professionals and contributing to sector-wide advancement through teaching and engagement.



Simon Spellicy

Simon has 30 years' experience in executive roles in the tourism, travel, hospitality, and cultural attraction sectors, with regional responsibility in Asia Pacific, Europe, Middle East, Pacific and Latin America. He has worked with large and small commercial, government & not-for-profit organisations, including as General Manager Tourism at Sydney Opera House where he grew revenues by 60 per cent and profit by more than 200 per cent.

Simon's career focus has been achieving growth through improved operations, visitor experience and commercial engagement. Simon was President of the NSW Tourism Industry Council (Business NSW) for 8 years to 2023.





Stacey Mills

Stacey Mills is the Manager of Invest and Live RV, based in the Richmond Valley, NSW. With over 20 years' experience in commercial and retail property, Stacey has worked closely with business owners to grow and enhance their retail and tourism offerings.

Known for her collaborative approach, Stacey is passionate about driving sustainable economic growth across the Northern Rivers region. Stacey's expertise and commitment to partnership support vibrant local communities and contribute to the ongoing development of a resilient and thriving visitor economy in her region.



Tony Mansfield

Tony brings a wealth of diplomatic, brand, marketing, business, and relationship skills developed through his management of leading global communications agencies. He applied these talents teaching business skills across the Asia Pacific region before dedicating the past eight years to running his own winery tourism business.

With a sharp business acumen, a passion for wine, and strong ties to the Canberra community, Tony now enjoys semi-retirement while managing Wamboin Hills Estate. A former two-time NSW Tourism Awards entrant, he offers broad and rich industry experience to the judging panel for 2025.



Yvette Myhill

Yvette Myhill is the General Manager of Destination Riverina Murray, one of 7 regional NSW organisation's supported by DNSW across the state to support regional tourism operators and local government tourism staff. She is the NSW rep on the board of Economic Development Australia and is also on the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Regional Advisory Committee.

Yvette has a background in both private and public service, having worked with local and state government, led national peak bodies, and managed major NSW music festivals. Yvette lives in a rural cross-border community in the west of the state on the border of NSW & Victoria.





Chris Chung

Chris is a Senior Policy Officer with the NSW Environment Protection Authority, with over 20 years' experience across Local and State Government. His career has spanned strategic projects in waste management, catchment health, resource efficiency and community engagement, with a strong focus on delivering outcomes that protect and enhance the environment.

Chris is particularly passionate about addressing litter, recognising its wide-ranging impact on communities and ecosystems. With expertise in sustainability and policy development, he is committed to driving positive environmental change across NSW and supporting initiatives that benefit both people and place.



Roberta Dixon-Valk

Roberta has had a lifetime love affair with our oceans and estuaries and is a marine ecologist and conservationist who has spent over 30 years working to look after the health of our oceans, estuaries, rivers and all the plants and animals that call these ecosystems home.

In 2009 Roberta co-founded Take 3 for the Sea - a proactive response to the ongoing issue of plastic pollution leaking into our oceans and choking marine wildlife. Take 3 has evolved to become a leading voice on the impact of plastic pollution crisis, inspiring over 352,000 participants in 129 countries to work together to help solve plastic pollution crisis by removing over 10,000,000 littered items annually.



Christine Tapara

Christine has over 15 years of experience across the corporate and not-for-profit sectors in account management, program management, and operations. Her career includes time spent running a family-owned surf academy, blending business expertise with a lifelong passion for the ocean. She currently applies her skills in Operations Management to two Australian NFPs—Take 3 For The Sea and SurfAid—supporting environmental and community-focused initiatives. Christine is committed to empowering individuals and communities to create lasting, behavior-driven change, and thrives in purpose-led roles that align with her values of sustainability, impact, and collaboration.





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