



Wednesday 5 February 2025

Media Release

NSW is on the search for its next Top Tourism Town and Top Tour Guide

The NSW Top Tourism Town awards program is about to commence, as towns of all sizes across the state compete to be crowned the best in their class.

The awards program, run by the NSW Tourism Association, brings a focus to regional tourism highlighting gems from coast to country, outback, mountains and river communities.

Local Councils and Accredited Visitor Information Centres are encouraged to nominate their town, followed by submitting an entry showcasing an itinerary, a video and a website with bookable product.

Towns can enter one of three categories depending on their size:

- Top Tourism Town Award – Population over 5,000
- Small Tourism Town Award – Population between 1,500 – 5,000
- Tiny Tourism Town Award – Population below 1,500

New to NSW for this year is the **NSW Top Tour Guide** category, where tour guides will be vying for the prestigious accolade with the winner going on to compete for the title of Australia's Top Tour Guide. Top Tour Guide entrants are required to provide a written submission and participate in an interview with a judging panel, as well as the nominating business being Sustainable Tourism Accredited in the Quality Tourism program.

All entries are assessed by a panel of industry expert judges from across the state, combined with a public vote - sponsored by our major partner NRMA - where visitors are encouraged to vote for their favourite Top Town.

Nominations open on Wednesday 5 February until 5 March, with submissions due by Friday 4 April. Nominate here: <https://nswtourismassociation.com.au/top-tourism-towns>

Natalie Godward, CEO NSW Tourism Association explains:

“The Top Tourism Town Awards highlight the vital role tourism plays in our communities across New South Wales. Regional towns are at the heart of the visitor economy, with



travellers contributing to jobs, infrastructure, and incredible and unique local experiences. In 2023–24 alone, visitors spent \$80 billion in regional Australia, with tourism injecting \$219 million into these areas every single day.

The judges will be looking for the strength, character and the unique appeal of these towns – highlighting what makes them special and why visitors are drawn to them. These awards celebrate the places that make New South Wales such a diverse and compelling destination.

NSW Tourism Association is proud to partner with NRMA for these awards, with winners to be featured in **Open Road Magazine** and shared with NRMA members, further elevating the profile of these incredible and loved towns across the state.”

Winners of the NSW Top Tourism Towns awards are announced at the Local Government NSW Destination & Visitor Economy Conference at Tweed Heads on 27 May 2025. The Gold winners from each category will then progress to Australia’s Top Tourism Town and Top Tour Guide awards to be held in Canberra in September.

Huskisson currently holds the crown as being Australia’s Top Tiny Town 2024 which has already resulted in a massive boost for their region. Kristy Mayhew, Manager Cultural & Community Services Shoalhaven City Council goes on to say:

“Entering the Top Town Awards in partnership with our local Business Chambers has resulted in a boost of media coverage including live weather crosses from the TODAY Show and a greater brand awareness of our off-season drivers of Wellness and Food.

Most importantly for our visitor economy, we have seen an increase in spend by visitors and length of stay. It has provided us with a great sense of community pride and has been helpful for grant programs and project funding to keep investing in our beautiful towns and villages.”

Last year’s winners still basking in their glory are:

- **NSW Top Tourism Town:** Gold – Kiama, Silver – Ballina, Bronze - Newcastle
Judges Commendation – Murwillumbah
- **NSW Small Tourism Town:** Gold – Berry, Silver – Merimbula, Bronze – Gloucester
- **NSW Tiny Tourism Town:** Gold – Huskisson, Silver – Broke, Bronze – Eugowra

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