

North Coast Regional Tourism Awards CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS 2026

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

This category recognises natural or built attractions that people visit for pleasure and interest. Entrants in this category attract significant visitor numbers during the qualifying period for their region.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

This category recognises tourism leisure festivals, events and exhibitions that enhance the profile/awareness and appeal of the destination they are held in as well as creating economic impact, increased visitation and community involvement.

This category is open to (but not limited to) sporting, arts, historical, cultural, literary, comedy, culinary and general interest festivals, events and exhibitions with local, interstate and international visitor attendance.

ECOTOURISM

This category recognises ecologically sustainable tourism businesses with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas. Entrants in this category foster environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation.

CULTURAL TOURISM

This category recognises tourism businesses that foster a greater understanding and appreciation of authentic culture, history, heritage and/or the arts.

ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER TOURISM EXPERIENCES

This category recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism businesses that demonstrate authenticity and cultivate a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and traditions.

TOURISM RETAIL, HIRE & SERVICES

This category recognises businesses that sell/provide goods or hire services which contribute to the tourism industry. The contribution made to the tourism industry can be economical (e.g. retail, galleries), experience based (traditionally non-tourism specific experiences e.g. shopping precincts) or service based (e.g. digital solutions for travellers or tourism businesses).

BUSINESS EVENT VENUES

This category recognises venues who provide high quality facilities specifically designed for business visitors e.g. meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions.

TOUR & TRANSPORT OPERATORS

This category recognises a business who makes a major contribution in the combined provision of touring and transport services.

ADVENTURE TOURISM

This category recognises outdoor adventure tourism experiences that involve visitor participation and a personal challenge.

TOURISM RESTAURANTS & CATERING SERVICES

This category recognises all restaurants and catering services offering a tourism experience and/or servicing the tourism industry. It is not a food award but does recognise a significant contribution to tourism through the provision of food and beverage. This category is open to hotel or stand-alone restaurants, event caterers, pubs and cafés.

TOURISM WINERIES, DISTILLERIES & BREWERIES

This category recognises wineries, distilleries and boutique breweries that offer a cellar door experience and create a significant contribution to tourism.

CARAVAN & HOLIDAY PARKS

This category recognises tourism excellence in a caravan or holiday park. The focus of this award is on both the facilities and services that enhance the tourism experience.

This category is open to caravan or holiday parks that offer cabin and tenting accommodation and must meet a 3 - 5 Caravan & Holiday Park Star Rating Standard.

HOSTED ACCOMMODATION

This category recognises hosted accommodation that offers a bed & breakfast, farm stay, cottage or other intimate accommodation experience and must meet a 3-5 Hosted Accommodation Star Rating Standard.

SELF-CONTAINED ACCOMMODATION

This category recognises tourism excellence in accommodation, providing guests with non-serviced accommodation and the freedom of self-sufficiency. The focus of this award is on both the facilities and services that enhance the tourism experience.

This category is open to accommodation that offers a self-catered accommodation experience and meets a 3-5 Self Catering Accommodation Star Rating Standard.

For companies that are managing multiple self-contained properties - they should focus on one of their properties.

4-4.5 STAR DELUXE ACCOMMODATION

This category recognises serviced accommodation that meets the 4 or 4.5 Star Rating Standard (pre-assessment or final rating). The focus of this award is on both the facilities and services that enhance the tourism experience. This category is open to accommodation experiences that meets a 4 or 4.5 Star Rating Standard in any Star Rating category.

5 STAR LUXURY ACCOMMODATION

This category recognises serviced accommodation that meets the 5 Star Rating Standard (pre-assessment or final rating). The focus of this award is on both the facilities and services that enhance the tourism experience. This category is open to accommodation experiences that meets a 5 Star Rating Standard in any Star Rating category.

NEW TOURISM BUSINESS

This category recognises new tourism businesses that have commenced trading, visitation, or service delivery during the qualifying period. This award recognises excellence in the planning and development of new tourism infrastructure and/or services.

Existing tourism businesses that have commenced a new product or opened new infrastructure need to enter another category most applicable to the business.



EXCELLENCE IN ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

This award recognises businesses that provide a tourism product, experience or service that goes above and beyond to accommodate and cater for people with disabilities and/or specific needs e.g. mobility, vision, and/or hearing impairment, neurodiversity, or other access needs.

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO REGIONAL TOURISM

This Regional-only award recognises the outstanding and enduring contribution by an individual to the Regional NSW tourism industry. This award honour's those who go over and above their own commercial focus to contribute to the broader industry.