

MEDIA ALERT

Thursday 3 February 2022



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INSPIRING 2021 NSW TOURISM AWARD WINNERS REVEALED

The state's peak tourism organisation, **NSW Tourism Industry Council**, is excited to announce the winners of the prestigious **NSW Tourism Awards** for 2021.

Presented tonight via a virtual ceremony broadcast live to an audience of over 650 industry guests tuning in from across NSW. The celebrations were amplified by the smiles and the acceptance speeches streamed live into homes and workplaces in a covid-safe manner.

"The NSW Tourism Awards are a celebration of the outstanding resilience and innovative spirit demonstrated by our magnificent industry over the past two years," said **NSW Tourism Industry Council Executive Manager, Greg Binskin**.

"It's been an extremely challenging period for the NSW visitor economy and after a break in 2020, the return of the NSW Tourism Awards demonstrates the renewed energy of the visitor economy and celebrates the people, places and the vibrant culture of our feel-good state".

"The Tourism Awards categories recognise the broad range of services and experiences across the broader visitor economy".

"It is impressive to see the number of operators and regions who made the most of lockdowns and restricted travel to build new visitor experiences and worked together to attract domestic visitors" Mr Binskin said.

"The 2021 awards showcase NSW's 'visitor first' approach and our strengths in digital innovation, high-quality product and collaborative efforts.

"These awards are managed by the NSW Tourism Industry Council, supported by Business NSW, and in partnership with the NSW Government and Destination NSW and celebrate our industry's path to recovery, re-energising and unifying all who are working hard to build back better," Mr Binskin said.

"I am immensely proud of all finalists of the 2021 NSW Tourism Awards, who have shown remarkable professionalism and dedication over an incredibly difficult period to deliver the best possible outcomes for the NSW tourism industry," said **NSW Minister for Tourism, Stuart Ayres**.

"The winners have shown a particular commitment to excellence, and I congratulate them for their innovation and perseverance that these awards represent.

"The NSW Government is committed to supporting tourism operators and events that create jobs, boost regional economies and position NSW as a global destination.

"We thank you for your outstanding contributions over the past 12 months and look forward to working together to achieve our goal of making NSW the premier visitor economy of the Asia Pacific," Mr Ayres said.

Sierra Escape, Mudgee and **Riverside Holiday Resort Urunga** were inducted into the prestigious NSW Tourism Awards Hall of Fame, for taking out top honours in their respective categories, Unique Accommodation and Self-Contained Accommodation for the third year in a row.

Ruth Sandow, Chair of Milparinka Heritage & Tourism Association was awarded the Dean Gorddard Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual to NSW in recognition of her dedication over the past 25 years to tourism in Corner Country, NSW. Milparinka has an average population through the year of 4, 2 at its lowest, 6 at its maximum. Yet Ruth's programs have over 100 volunteers that become part of the community in the peak season. Milparinka would not be welcoming 20,000 visitors a year if it wasn't for Ruth. She understands that by building Milparinka as a destination, all of Corner Country benefit and in 2020 she was successful in a monumental project, known as "Sturts Steps", that has linked the whole region together and set it up for tourism success.

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Recipient of the Young Achiever Award, **Hugh Sutherland, Instructor with Blue Mountains Climbing School** was recognised for his passion as an outdoor guide and educator who has high aims for the industry as a whole that is beyond just the areas he and his employers benefit. Hugh has devoted considerable effort and energy in furthering and supporting the NSW and Blue Mountains Adventure tourism guiding industry through mentoring young guides and contributing to recent developments towards generating an outdoor industry employment award.

Eden Visitor Information Centre, The Sapphire Coast; Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and **Simpson Cottage, Bundeeena** were the recipients of a new accolade awarded by the Judges, 'Tourism Star Award' to acknowledge their tremendous resilience shown in response to floods, bushfires and COVID-19.

Winners in the designated national award categories will represent NSW at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards to be held on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, 18 March 2022.

EDITORS' NOTE: A full list of this year's NSW Tourism Awards winners by category is outlined below.

About NSW Tourism Industry Council

Powered by **Business NSW**, the NSW Tourism Industry Council helps businesses operating in the Visitor Economy maximise their potential to ensure New South Wales remains the number one tourism destination in Australia.

About NSW Tourism Awards

Now in its 31st year, the NSW Tourism Awards celebrate business excellence, acknowledge business innovation and reward exceptional customer service. Parts of the 2021 program were modified to reflect the business challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters over the past 12-months.

The NSW Tourism Awards attracted 116 entrants representing a diverse range of businesses from across New South Wales. Finalists across 29 categories are recognised for excellence in a range of tourism areas such as Tourist Attractions, Festivals and Events, Ecotourism, New Tourism Business, Tourism Marketing & Campaigns, Accommodation, Excellence in Accessible Tourism and Local Government Award for Tourism.

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2021 NSW TOURISM AWARDS WINNERS

Major Tourist Attractions

Gold: Taronga Western Plains Zoo, Dubbo

Silver: Australian Reptile Park, Somersby

Bronze: BridgeClimb, The Rocks

Tourist Attractions

Gold: Oakvale Wildlife Park, Salt Ash

Silver: Hello Koalas Sculpture Trail, Port Macquarie

Bronze: Aussie Ark, Barrington Tops

Major Festivals and Events

Gold: Sydney Caravan Camping Holiday Supershow

Silver: Hunter Valley Gardens: 2020 Christmas Lights Spectacular

Bronze: Hunter Valley Gardens: 2021 Mega Creatures/ Mega Creatures Night Safari

Festivals and Events

Gold: Deni Ute Muster 2019

Silver: Bathurst Regional Council: Bathurst Winter Festival 2019

Bronze: Murray River Council: Moama Lights 2021

Ecotourism

Gold: Tweed Eco Cruises, Tweed Heads

Silver: Vision Walks - Eco Tours, Mullumbimby

Bronze: Sydney by Kayak, Lavender Bay

Cultural Tourism

Gold: Hello Koalas Sculpture Trail, Port Macquarie

Excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism

Gold: The Giingan Experience by Bularri Muurlay Nyanggan Aboriginal Corporation, Coffs Harbour

Silver: Bundy Cultural Tours, Wagga Wagga

Bronze: Wajaana Yaam Gumbayngirr Adventure Tours, Coffs Harbour

Tourism Retail & Hire Services

Gold: Sydney Harbour Kayaks, Mosman

Visitor Information Services

Gold: Bathurst Visitor Information Centre

Silver: Mudgee Region Tourism

Bronze: Shoalhaven Visitor Services

Business Event Venues

Gold: Events at Taronga

Major Tour and/or Transport Operators

Gold: Hughes - Australia's Chauffeur Service, Sydney

Tour and/or Transport Operators

Gold: Tweed Eco Cruises, Tweed Heads

Silver: Beyond Ballooning, Lovedale

Bronze: Activity Tours Australia

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Adventure Tourism

Gold: Lets Go Surfing, Bondi to Byron Bay

Silver: Beyond Ballooning, Lovedale

Bronze: Coffs Skydivers, Coffs Harbour

Tourism Marketing and Campaigns

Gold: Mudgee Region Tourism

Silver: MidCoast Council: Destination Barrington Coast

Bronze: Orange360

Tourism Restaurants and Catering Services

Gold: The River Deck, Albury

Silver: Cupitt's Estate, Ulladulla

Bronze: Birch, Moss Vale

Tourism Wineries, Distilleries and Breweries

Gold: Heifer Station Wines, Orange

Silver: Courabyra Wines, Tumbarumba

Bronze: Cape Byron Distillery, McLeods Shoot

Caravan and Holiday Parks

Gold: Ingenia Holidays South West Rocks

Silver: Swansea Lakeside Holiday Park

Bronze: Reflections Holiday Parks Seal Rocks

Hosted Accommodation

Gold: Blueberry Hills on Comleroy, Kurrajong

Silver: Belle Bois, Capertee Valley

Bronze: Ridge Retreat Mollymook

Unique Accommodation

Gold/ Hall of Fame: Sierra Escape, Mudgee

Silver: Zoofari Lodge, Taronga Western Plains Zoo, Dubbo

Bronze: Mildura Houseboats, Buronga NSW

Self-Contained Accommodation

Gold/Hall of Fame: Riverside Holiday Resort Urunga

Silver: The Observatory Holiday Apartments, Coffs Harbour

Bronze: Bandalong Cottages, Mudgee

3 – 3.5 Star Accommodation

Gold: Manera Heights Apartments, Dubbo

4 – 4.5 Star Accommodation

Gold: Byng Street Boutique Hotel, Orange

Silver: Blueys Motel, Blueys Beach

Bronze: Ibis Styles The Entrance

5 Star Accommodation

Gold: Mt Hay Retreat, Berry

Silver: QT Sydney

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New Tourism Business

Gold: Sydney Zoo, Bungarribee

Silver: A by Adina Sydney

Bronze: Quentin Park Alpacas & Studio Gallery, Tomingley

Highly Commended: Country Food Trails, Orange

Excellence in Food Tourism

Gold: Blue Ginger Picnics, Kingscliff

Excellence in Accessible Tourism*

Gold: Riverside Holiday Resort Urunga

Silver: Seafarers Diamond Beach

Bronze: Cocky Guides, Sydney

Local Government Award for Tourism*

Gold: MidCoast Council: Destination Barrington Coast

Silver: Port Macquarie-Hastings Council

Bronze: Central Coast Council Marketing and Tourism Team

Young Achievers Award*

Winner: Hugh Sutherland, Blue Mountains Climbing School

Dean Gorrdard Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual*

Winner: Ruth Sandow, Chair of Milparinka Heritage & Tourism Association

Judges' Tourism Star Award*

Winners:

- Eden Visitor Information Centre, The Sapphire Coast
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- Simpson Cottage, Bundeena

**Does not progress to the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards*