

Business and Industry Action Plan

2025 – 2035



Old and Gold Festival in Brunswick Heads



BYRON
SHIRE
COUNCIL



Jingi Walla – Welcome

Acknowledgment of Country

Byron Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Aboriginal Custodians and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and country.

We recognise and respect the Bundjalung of Byron Bay – Arakwal and the Widjabul Wia-bal Peoples native title rights and interests within the Shire.

Byron Shire Council also acknowledges the Tweed Byron, Jali and Ngulingah Local Aboriginal Land Councils under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act NSW 1983.

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Executive Summary

The Business and Industry Action Plan supports Byron Shire’s Economic Strategy 2025–2035 by outlining targeted actions to grow a resilient, inclusive and values-aligned local economy.

Byron’s economy is diverse, spanning creative industries, agriculture, construction, health, professional services and more. While this diversity is a strength, the region faces challenges such as rising costs, infrastructure strain and workforce access.

This plan prioritises action to deliver on the Economic Strategy’s vision, principles and objectives.

Actions will evolve across three Delivery Horizons (2028, 2032, 2035), with input by an Economic Activation Group. Progress will be tracked through key indicators.

The plan aims to strengthen Byron’s business ecosystem and ensure economic development reflects community values and long-term sustainability.

Context

Byron Shire's business and industry landscape reflects its deep cultural heritage, evolving identity and regional connections. Located on the traditional lands of the Arakwal, Minjungbal and Widjabul Wia-bal Peoples of the Bundjalung Nation, the Shire has long been a place of trade, gathering and enterprise. From early agriculture and industry to today's mix of creative, professional and purpose-driven businesses, Byron's economy continues to evolve in response to local values and global change.

The Shire supports a diverse mix of enterprises – from artisans and home-based creatives to professional services, regenerative farmers and advanced manufacturers. This diversity strengthens economic resilience and community wellbeing. Byron's strong brand and lifestyle appeal attract talent and investment, but also bring challenges such as rising costs, infrastructure strain and identity pressures.

Regionally connected through the Northern Rivers, Byron Shire benefits from shared infrastructure and labour markets. Its income and employment profile spans high-earning professionals to low-income and seasonal workers, highlighting the need for inclusive economic planning.

This focus area for action supports the broader Economic Strategy by enabling coordinated investment, targeted support and a thriving, values-aligned business ecosystem that creates meaningful local employment.



Economic Snapshot

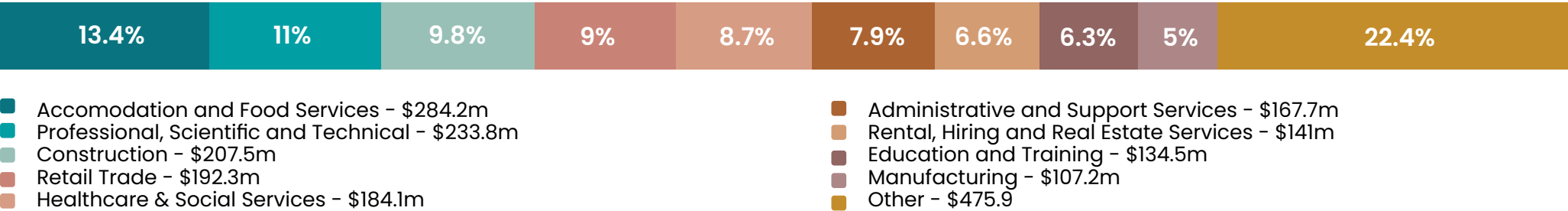
Data supports an economic baseline for Financial Year 2024.

- **\$2.82b** Byron Shire Gross Regional Product (GRP)¹
- Average Annual GRP Growth of the last decade¹
+7.8% Byron | **+2.3%** NSW and AUS

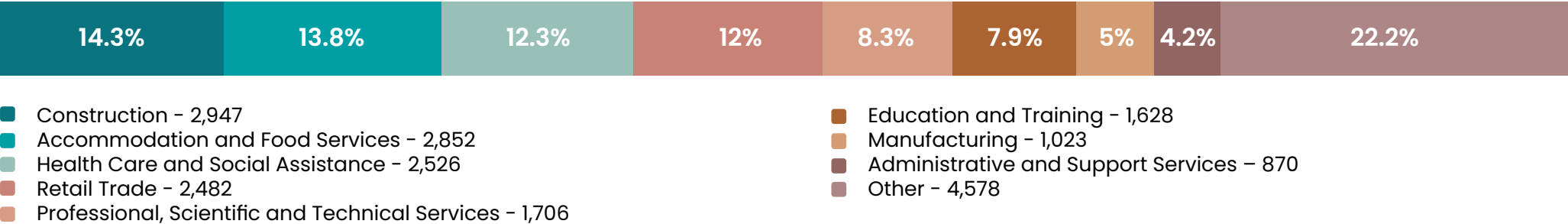
- **6050** Registered Businesses²
- **20,613** Local Jobs³
- **19,078** Employed Residents⁴



Largest Economic Contributions⁵



Largest Employer⁶



Target Sectors

Data supports an economic baseline for Financial Year 2024.

Target Sector	Value Added (m)	Jobs (direct total)
Advanced Manufacturing	\$107.2 ⁵	1,023 ⁶
Agriculture ¹¹	\$24.7	492
Construction	\$207.5 ⁵	2,947 ⁶
Creative Industries ⁹	\$254.4	2,001
Education and training	\$134.5 ⁵	1,628 ⁶
Festivals and Events ⁸	\$88.1	799
Health care and social assistance	\$184.1 ⁵	2,526 ⁶
Professional Business Services ¹⁰	\$535.6	3,156
Visitor Economy ⁷	\$508.9	2,112



SWOT

Based on the research and engagement conducted for this project, the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) have been identified.

Strengths

- Attractive and enviable lifestyle
- Strong existing destination brand and awareness
- Innovative culture
- Skilled workforce
- Natural amenity and landscapes
- Entrepreneurial culture
- Access to the Pacific Motorway
- Local agricultural production and artisan producers
- Unique culture
- Progressive and inclusive community
- Established visitor destination
- Unique towns and villages
- Vibrant arts and culture scene

Weaknesses

- Lack of affordable and available housing
- Worker shortages
- Permitting and planning regulations
- Lack of industrial land
- High cost of living
- Poor condition of local roads
- Lack of public transport and effective inter-regional transport networks
- Poor internet and mobile coverage
- Lack of arts and culture infrastructure
- Aging population
- Lack of event venues
- Too much reliance on Tourism

Opportunities

- Visitor economy
- Creative industries
- Professional business services
- Agriculture
- Advanced manufacturing
- Circular economy
- Food and beverage production
- Film industry
- Arts and culture
- Regional collaboration
- Renewable energy
- Indigenous business
- Start-ups and scale-ups

Threats

- Climate change and natural disasters
- Retaining local culture in the face of significant growth and change
- Over tourism (too many visitors that lead to congestion, crowding and activities that do not align with community values)
- Protecting the integrity of the brand
- Continued reliance upon the visitor economy
- Rising prices and lack of housing could drive many residents out of the community
- Gentrification impacts that may not align with community values



For example lists, see the Byron Shire Economic Strategy 2025-2035.

Our Response

This Action Plan reflects the Economic Strategy's commitment to a targeted, integrated and collaborative approach. It identifies priority actions for Business & Industry in Byron Shire, guided by the strategy's overarching economic Vision, Objectives and Principles. These actions are designed to align with and complement, not duplicate, existing initiatives across Council and beyond.

Council's action will evolve across three Delivery Horizons: from strengthening to scaling and ultimately enabling long-term transformation of Council's enabling role and as outcomes for the local economy.

Implementation will be staged and adaptive, with actions delivered through a suite of evolving activities. These will be designed to be ready to benefit from funding opportunities, collaboration and a variety of roles of Council.

Action Plans for each economic focus area complement and overlap. This integrated approach means that the Byron Shire Economic Strategy 2025-2035 should be read alongside its supporting Action Plans for a full picture of activity.

Council's Economic Development Roles



Advocate: Champion local needs to attract funding and policy support.



Promote: Share Byron's story and celebrate local success.



Support: Back local initiatives with funding, advice or resources.



Collaborate: Work with partners to deliver shared outcomes.



Facilitate: Bring people together and support collaboration.



Model: Demonstrate and pilot best practice as a local business.



Deliver: Provide services, infrastructure and programs.



Plan: Provide a clear, enabling planning and regulatory framework.

Target Sectors

The following have been defined by their current and future potential economic contribution, high value adding nature, export orientation and high levels of both innovation and community wealth building. Some are industries, defined by the type of goods or services produced such as construction or health care. Others are sectors, which group related industries or activities under a common theme, like the visitor economy or creative industries. Otherwise, professional services and Advanced Manufacturing, represent parts of an industry or cross-sector activity that plays a significant role in Byron Shire's economy.



Advanced manufacturing: This sector includes food and beverage producers, artisan makers and high-tech innovators. Typically small in scale but export oriented and highly innovative, these businesses are supported by Byron's strong brand, which boosts product appeal and reach, though it can also create pressure in a region known for incubating early-stage enterprise. The sector contributes to economic diversity and aligns with Byron's strengths in sustainability, branding and circular economy leadership.

Agriculture: This sector remains a foundational part of Byron's economy and identity, with 20% of the Shire's land used for production¹². It includes macadamias, cattle, nursery products and small-scale horticulture. The sector supports food security, environmental stewardship and local enterprise. A refreshed Agriculture Action Plan is in development to support regenerative practices, value-adding and agritourism.

Construction: One of Byron Shire's largest employers and economic contributors, Construction is foundational to the local economy. It includes many small businesses and sole traders – builders, electricians, landscapers, civil contractors, solar installers and other specialist trades. The industry underpins housing, infrastructure and commercial development and offers strong potential for local wealth building through apprenticeships and procurement. As Byron grows, Construction can also help position Byron as a sustainability leader by balancing development with environmental and community values.

Creative industries: This sector includes visual and performing arts, music, film, design, publishing and digital media. Byron Shire is home to one of the highest concentrations of creative professionals in Australia¹³, contributing both cultural vibrancy and economic value. Creative industries intersect with other sectors such as events, tourism and professional services and are supported through multiple action plans including events and the emerging night-time economy action plan.

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Education and training: A foundational industry for employment, GRP contribution and community prosperity, it locally includes early learning centres, public and independent schools, vocational training, adult education and alternative models. The sector builds capacity by aligning skills with industry needs and supporting youth engagement, inclusion and lifelong learning.

Events and Festivals: A key contributor to Byron's creative industries and visitor economy, this sector over 220,000 attendees annually¹⁴ and supports significant local employment and cultural activation. Events range from small community gatherings to major festivals, with strong local participation and economic impact. A dedicated Events action plan supports inclusive, resilient and locally aligned event delivery across the Shire.

Health care and social assistance: One of the Shire's largest and most essential industries as a key contributor to employment, wealth and regional identity. The industry is diverse with state led delivery of hospitals and health infrastructure, general practices, allied health providers, aged care, disability support, mental health services, wellness practitioners and community organisations. It is vital to Byron's wellbeing and economic resilience.

Professional business services: This vast sector includes finance, insurance, IT, consulting, media, architecture and other knowledge-based fields. It is Byron Shire's largest contributor to Gross Regional Product¹⁵. While less visible than sectors like tourism, it generates high economic value through remote and regionally connected work, often servicing clients beyond the Shire. Its strong export orientation and income multiplier effect make it a key driver of economic resilience and diversity.

Visitor economy: A major contributor to Byron's economy, this sector spans accommodation, food, retail, wellness and cultural experiences. It supports a wide range of small businesses and jobs. Broader than traditional tourism, the term reflects all types of visitor activity as well as social, environment and economic impact. A dedicated Destination Management and Visitor Economy Action Plan supports a destination management approach to visitation, focused on local benefit, sustainability and alignment with community values



Priorities

The following provides examples of what strategic actions looks like. They were informed by the Economic Activation Group and will be refined through their ongoing input.

Local Procurement: Review and promote Council's procurement systems to better support local businesses. This work will help ensure more Council spending stays in the region, supporting more local jobs and strengthening local supply chains.

Mitigate barriers to doing business: Identify challenges to doing business in Byron Shire with aim to clarify, mitigate or remove. This includes improving communication of DA processes for business, monitor & report on Byron's economic performance.

Investment attraction: Promote successful local businesses and encourage opportunities for values-aligned investment. This will support a localised approach to economic development, helping Byron Shire attract investment that reflects community values and creates stronger local economic multipliers.

Re-establish Byron as a film-friendly destination with local benefits: Work with industry and community to refresh Byron's film-friendly status while balancing community and industry needs. By streamlining processes and promoting local talent, suppliers and locations, this will support creative enterprise, attract values-aligned visitation and investment with economic benefits flowing to local business and workforce.

Support target sectors for improved innovation, collaboration and productivity: Facilitate networking and knowledge exchange across key sectors to help bolster clusters that drive innovation, increase productivity and strengthen Byron's business ecosystem. Action begins with facilitation and builds to investigation of local innovation hub opportunities.

Support regenerative and circular economy opportunities: Provide practical support for businesses adopting regenerative and circular practices, including access to resources, case studies and collaboration opportunities. This will help position Byron as a leader in sustainable enterprise and future-focused economic development.

Promote vibrant streetscapes: Encourage activation of underutilised spaces through pop-ups, micro-enterprise and creative placemaking. This includes being investment ready for community aligned opportunities and working with local businesses and community to enhance public spaces, support local trade and improve the experience of town centres.

Support Aboriginal-led businesses: Support Aboriginal organisations and entrepreneurs to strengthen business development, visibility and self-determination. This includes tailored support, collaboration, promotion and procurement pathways that reflect Byron's commitment to an inclusive economy.

Implementation

Implementation of the strategic actions will evolve across the Delivery Horizons, with activities staged over time to reflect available resources, emerging opportunities and community priorities. A new Business as Usual (BAU) will be implemented alongside a suite of identified change making projects. Some activities will overlap across actions and economic focus areas, reflecting the Economic Strategy's integrated approach and the interconnected nature of Byron Shire's economy.

Objective	Action	Ref	Activity	Council Role	Horizon Start	Delivery Horizon			New BAU	Change Making Project
						1	2	3		
A. Identity Driven	1. Attract values-aligned investment and protect Byron's identity to ensure resilient and community aligned growth.	1.1	Advance business development and investment opportunities through connections, resources and information.	Support, Collaborate, Facilitate	1				✓	
		1.2	Advocate for regional investment with local benefit.	Advocate	1				✓	
		1.3	Investigate geo-branding options to ensure branding and marketing aligns with the Byron Shire identity.	Support	2					✓
		1.4	business environment that showcases investment opportunities, benefits and clear steps for involvement for local and other investors.	Plan, Deliver	2					✓
	2. Accelerate the shift to position Byron as an innovative sustainability leader	2.1	Deliver sustainability workshops and sector engagement.	Collaborate, Facilitate, Deliver	1				✓	
		2.2	Identify and support green, regenerative and circular businesses and industries.	Plan, Support	2					✓
		2.3	Investigate values-aligned business certification for Council.	Model	3					✓

Objective	Action	Ref	Activity	Council Role	Horizon Start	Delivery Horizon			New BAU	Change Making Project
						1	2	3		
B. Local Opportunity	3. Strengthen local business, supply chains and circular systems to grow community wealth and retain local spend in the community.	3.1	Investigate a shop local campaign with the business community.	Promote, Support, Collaborate	1					✓
		3.2	Research barriers of doing business with the aim to remove, mitigate or lobby for change.	Plan, Deliver, Advocate	2					✓
		3.3	Audit and refine local procurement for Council as a model business.	Model, Support	2					✓
		3.4	Map supply chains and circular economy opportunities regionally.	Plan, Promote	2					✓
		3.5	Encourage cooperatives and social enterprises.	Facilitate, Support	2				✓	
		3.6	Explore incentives and initiatives to encourage local buying.	Support, Plan	3					✓
	4. Support inclusive workforce pathways to address equity gaps and unlock local talent.	4.1	Improve training opportunities to meet workforce gaps with diversity, equity and inclusion at the core.	Facilitate, Collaborate	1				✓	
		4.2	Support youth pathway, including business based work placements.	Collaborate	1				✓	
		4.3	Grow Council work experience placements.	Model	1				✓	
		4.4	Continue to support social procurement and inclusive hiring practices.	Promote, Model	1				✓	
		4.5	Support business incubators for entrepreneurial employment.	Facilitate	3					✓

Objective	Action	Ref	Activity	Council Role	Horizon Start	Delivery Horizon			New BAU	Change Making Project
						1	2	3		
C. Resilience & Adaptability	5. Foster innovation and clustering to drive creativity, productivity and future-focused enterprise.	5.1	Improve supports for remote worker connectivity.	Support, Advocate	1				✓	
		5.2	Re-establish Byron as a film-friendly destination with local and regional benefits.	Advocate, Plan	2					✓
		5.3	Encourage sector-based collaboration and innovation for improved productivity.	Support, Facilitate	2					✓
		5.4	Identify business clusters and assess opportunities for shared innovation, collaboration spaces and workforce opportunities.	Plan, Facilitate, Promote	2					✓
D. Regenerative Tourism & Events	6. Activate underutilised spaces for micro-enterprise and vibrant local economies	6.1	Promote vibrant places by showcasing existing strengths in streetscapes, public places and activations.	Promote, Facilitate, Collaborate	1				✓	
		6.2	Investigate temporary and pop up activation opportunities for micro enterprises in underutilised spaces.	Facilitate, Support, Deliver	2					✓
		6.3	Support cooperatives and micro enterprise collaboration with scaling into permanent spaces.	Support	3					✓
E. Creative Industries & Cultural Enterprise	7. Advance Aboriginal economic self-determination for a culturally strong and inclusive economy	7.1	Support Aboriginal-led businesses.	Support	1				✓	
		7.2	Support developing a “deadly economy” vision statement.	Support	1					✓

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Objective	Action	Ref	Activity	Council Role	Horizon Start	Delivery Horizon			New BAU	Change Making Project
						1	2	3		
F. Informed & Impactful	8. Champion a thriving and inclusive business environment to build trust, collaboration and resilience.	8.1	Co-design and launch an improved business needs survey.	Facilitate, Collaborate	1				✓	
		8.2	Celebrate local business heroes.	Promote	1				✓	
		8.3	Continue to provide a business and industry concierge service	Support, Deliver	1				✓	
		8.4	Simplify and communicate DA processes for business.	Plan, Deliver	1					✓
	9. Enable evidence-based decisions and transparent delivery with economic data and insights	9.1	Review and continue to deliver the Business E News	Deliver	1				✓	
		9.2	Continue to monitor, report and share economic data, insights and research.	Plan, Promote, Support	1				✓	
		9.3	Investigate a Customer Relationship Management system as business database for improved and sustainable business relationships.	Plan	1					✓
		9.4	Map and welcome businesses for improved resilience and local support.	Deliver	1				✓	
		9.5	Investigate developing a doughnut economics model for Byron Shire to guide sustainable growth by balancing community needs and environmental limits.	Plan, Collaborate	2					✓
		9.6	Investigate a dashboard and reporting framework that combines decentralised data.	Plan	3					✓

Monitoring and Review

Monitoring for this Action Plan will follow the overarching framework set out in the Byron Shire Economic Strategy. Progress will be tracked through quarterly and annual reporting, Economic Activation Group engagement and staged audits aligned with the Strategy's Delivery Horizons:

- **Horizon 1 (2028):** Strengthen: Early wins, system stabilisation, momentum builds.
- **Horizon 2 (2032):** Transition: Scaling, innovation, strategy review.
- **Horizon 3 (2035):** Transform: Long-term change, evaluation, strategy reset.

Outcome indicators will track changes in Byron Shire's Business and Industry environment. While Council is not the sole driver of outcomes, it plays a key enabling role.

To support this approach, the following indicators will help to monitor progress and outcomes over time:

Indicator	FY2024 (Baseline)
Gross Regional Product (GRP) ¹	2.82b
Population ¹⁵	37,826
Local Jobs ³	20,613
Employed residents ⁴	19,078
Registered Businesses ²	6,050
Industry diversity – Value add to GRP ⁵	13% – Accommodation & food services 11% – Professional, scientific & technical services 10% – Construction 9% – Retail trade 9% – Health care & social assistance 48% – Other
Industry diversity – Employment ⁶	15% – Construction 14% – Accommodation & food services 12% – Health care and social assistance 12% – Retail trade 8% – Professional, scientific & technical services 8% – Education and training 31% – Other
Economic Development Satisfaction (/5) ¹⁶	2.6

For full details, refer to the Monitoring & Review section of the Byron Shire Economic Strategy.

Sources and Endnotes

1. National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) 2025; Economy ID 2025. Available: economy.id.com.au/byron/gross-product
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2024; Economy ID 2025. Available: economy.id.com.au/byron/number-of-businesses-by-industry
3. National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) 2025; Economy ID 2025. Available: economy.id.com.au/byron/local-jobs
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5. National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) 2025; Economy ID 2025. Available: economy.id.com.au/byron/value-add-by-industry
6. National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) 2025; Economy ID 2025. Available: economy.id.com.au/byron/employment-by-industry
7. National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) 2025; Economy ID 2025. Available: economy.id.com.au/byron/tourism-value
8. GRP contribution estimated as 45% of total visitor expenditure, based on ABS Tourism Satellite Account methodology and Economy ID event impact modelling benchmarks. Lucid Economics modelling ratio for draft BIVE Strategy (385 jobs for \$94.3M visitor expenditure) applied to TRA visitor expenditure modelling (\$195.8M), resulting in 799 jobs. Visitor and expenditure estimates use TRA national event travel data (National Visitor Survey & International Visitor Survey) due to low regional sample size in FY2024. This is combined with Byron Shire attendance per endnote 15. Assumptions: 30% locals excluded; visitor split 62% daytrip, 30% domestic overnight, 8% international; spend \$213/daytrip, \$1,139/domestic trip, \$9,975/international trip; nights 2.7 domestic, 7 international.
9. Creative industries include industries and subdivisions Creative and performing arts activities, Heritage activities, Motion picture and sound recording activities, Internet publishing and broadcasting, Publishing (except internet), Broadcasting (except internet), and Professional, scientific and technical services (excluding computer design and related services). Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) 2025; Economy ID 2025. Available: economy.id.com.au/byron/industry-sector-analysis?IndkeyNieir=22000&sEndYear=2022
10. Professional Business Services include industries and subdivisions Professional, scientific & technical services, Finance and insurance services, Information, media and telecommunications, Administration and support services Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) 2025; Economy ID 2025. Available: economy.id.com.au/byron/industry-sector-analysis?IndkeyNieir=22000&sEndYear=2022
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13. Who We Are Report LGA Profiles – Byron Shire Creative Sector Profile and Needs Analysis 2025. Available: artsnorthernrivers.com.au/news/who-we-are-creative-profiles-now-live-for-each-lga
14. Byron Shire Council 2025; Events FY2024 Data (Internal Source). Based on applications for events in public spaces and funding support from Council.
15. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2024; Economy ID 2025. Available: economy.id.com.au/byron/population
16. Micromex Research – Community Satisfaction Survey 2024. Available: byron.nsw.gov.au/Council/Report-Requests-Feedback/Customer-Service-Performance-Standards/Community-satisfaction-survey

Document Tracking

Doc No.	Date	Detail
E2025/115799	November 2025	Reported to Council for Adoption, considered draft for work shopping with the Economic Activation Group (EAG)
E2026/52091	June 2026	Updated following prioritisation workshops with the EAG, reported to Council for adoption.

Thank You to Photo Contributions

Credit goes to Katie Holmes for Soul Street, Emily Cherie Read for the NSW Music Summit, and Flawless Imaging for most other photography



Byron Bay Farmers Market

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