



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 4 June 2025

Winners Announced in 2025 NSW Top Tour Guide Awards

Some of New South Wales' most inspiring tourism professionals have been recognised in the inaugural NSW Top Tour Guide Awards, announced tonight at a spectacular event on Sydney Harbour during Vivid Sydney.

Delivered by NSW Tourism Association in partnership with Tour Guides Australia, Outdoors NSW & ACT and Journey Beyond Cruise Sydney, the awards celebrate excellence in tour guiding - recognising individuals who bring destinations to life through storytelling, knowledge and unforgettable visitor experiences.

2025 NSW Top Tour Guide Award Winners:

- **Gold:** Justin Steele – Local Sauce Tours
- **Silver:** Nathan Lygon – Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council
- **Bronze:** Amanda Fry – Experience Nature
- **Highly Commended:** Rebecca Dunning – Stand Up Paddle Boarding Shellharbour
- **Highly Commended:** Tiga Cross – Coffs Coast Wildlife Sanctuary

All finalists will receive affiliate membership with Tour Guides Australia, with the top three recipients receiving full professional accreditation. The Gold winner, Justin Steele, will go on to represent NSW at the national Top Tour Guide Awards in Canberra.

“These winners represent the heart of what makes tourism meaningful - connection, culture and care,” said Natalie Godward, CEO of NSW Tourism Association.

“We are proud to honour individuals who deliver not just a service, but a sense of place and purpose. This award highlights the critical role guides play in shaping visitor perceptions and enriching local economies. Our partnership with Tour Guides Australia is vital in building a more professional and sustainable guiding sector in NSW.”

The awards also reflect a growing commitment across the sector to raise standards and address the shortage of skilled, accredited guides across Australia.



“Tour guides are more than hosts - they’re storytellers, custodians and cultural interpreters,” said Greg Esnouf, President of Tour Guides Australia.

“By partnering with NSW Tourism Association, we’re lifting the profile of guiding as a profession and helping build a workforce that delivers quality insightful experiences.”

The event was held in collaboration with Outdoors NSW & ACT, a longstanding advocate for high standards in outdoor and adventure tourism.

“Adventure Guides are often the unsung heroes of the outdoor experiences — leading with safety, educating with passion, and delivering unforgettable moments in some of the most remote and geographically stunning parts of our natural world,” said Lori Modde, CEO of Outdoors NSW & ACT.

“These awards not only recognise the incredible skill and commitment of these professionals but also highlight the critical importance of qualifications and experience in ensuring safe and enriching outdoor adventures for all.”

Journey Beyond Cruise Sydney hosted the awards aboard one of their premier vessels, with Sydney Harbour and Vivid Sydney providing an unforgettable backdrop.

“It was an honour to host this celebration recognising the people who deliver some of the most memorable tourism experiences in our state,” said Daniel Toby, General Manager for Journey Beyond Cruise Sydney.

“We’re proud to support initiatives that celebrate excellence in the tourism sector.”

NSW Tourism Association congratulates all finalists for their passion, professionalism and commitment to excellence.

The NSW Top Tour Guide Awards reflect the Association’s commitment to professional development and high standards across the NSW visitor economy.



2025 Finalists – NSW Top Tour Guide Award

- **Tiga Cross** – Coffs Coast Wildlife Sanctuary
- **Tom Cosgrove** – Sydney Oyster Farm Tours
- **Rebecca Dunning** – Stand Up Paddleboarding Shellharbour
- **Ben Butof** – Activity Tours Australia
- **Justin Steele** – Local Sauce Tours
- **Nathan Lygon** – Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council
- **Amanda Fry** – Experience Nature
- **Graham Chapman** – Chapman Tours

ENDS

For media inquiries, please contact:

Natalie Godward

CEO, NSW Tourism Association

ceo@nswtourismassociation.com.au

(02) 9089 8889