



2026 Awards (2026)

Outstanding Visitor & 24-Hour Economy Collaboration (Region: Far South Coast)

Business NSW - Outstanding Visitor & 24HR Economy Collaboration



rapdjYGn

Entry details

Trading name:	Business NSW
Name to be used on all promotional materials (publicity materials, certificates, trophies, presentations):	Business NSW
Registered ABN:	63 000 014 504
How is your business structured?	Incorporated Association

Is your business classified as a not for profit? Yes

Main office address: Level 7, 8 Chifley Square

Suburb: Sydney

Postcode: 2000

Business trading commencement date: 2021-02-01

Number of employees: 1 to 5

Is your business primarily business to business or business to consumer? Business to Consumer

Describe your business, product/service you offer to the market or industry

The Lakeside Festival (LSF) has been held annually since 2013, except in 2020/21 due to COVID-19. As the premier music festival in Forster/Tuncurry region, it features nationally renowned and local artists performing at John Wright Park, overlooking Wallis Lake. The festival incorporates broad community engagement with local arts, craft and produce suppliers in a market setting. LSF drives economic, social, and cultural benefits, with visitation rates reaching 62% in 2024. Collaborating with local businesses and council, LSF remains financially sustainable. Its 1 of 5 new initiative in 2025, The Launch Pad, underscores commitment to supporting emerging local artists

Please provide a 100 word biography for your business to be used for promotional purposes.

The Lakeside Festival (LSF) has been held annually since 2013, except in 2020/21 due to COVID-19. As the premier music festival in Forster/Tuncurry region, it features nationally renowned and local artists performing at John Wright Park, overlooking Wallis Lake. The festival incorporates broad community engagement with local arts, craft and produce suppliers in a market setting. LSF drives economic, social, and cultural benefits, with visitation rates reaching 62% in 2024. Collaborating with local businesses and council, LSF remains financially sustainable. Its 1 of 5 new initiative in 2025, The Launch Pad, underscores commitment to supporting emerging local artists

Website: <https://www.businessnsw.com/>

PROMOTIONAL IMAGES

Please attach 2 hero images that best depict your entry. It could be a logo or team group photo. Images will be used at the awards presentation and for Media for any promotions as required, (These must be no bigger than 10MB each in jpeg format – hi resolution, landscape format images).

PROMOTIONAL IMAGE 1



[Download \(19 KiB download\)](#)

PROMOTIONAL IMAGE 2

Entrant/ Nominee's Contact Details

Full name: Business NSW

Position: Test Entry

Email: test@businessnsw.com

Phone: +61416457830

Owner/CEO/Director contact details

Full name: Business NSW

Position: Test Entry

Email: test@businessnsw.com

Mobile: +61416457028

The business has been trading/
operating for a continuous period
of two years or more and is not
bankrupt or trading insolvent at the
time of entry. ✓

A representative of this business
has not been a judge in this
category in 2025. ✓

A representative of this business is
not a judge in the 2026 Business
Awards program. ✓

Briefly describe the project undertaken by your organisation. Include information on how the project was identified, how it addressed a new or existing need and, and outline its primary goals and objectives.

Lakeside Festival (LSF) is a not-for-profit organisation operated entirely by volunteers in Forster/Tuncurry. Widely recognised as the premier music festival on the Mid North Coast, it is managed by an elected committee working with regional stakeholders to deliver a high-quality annual event each November.

In response to state and local strategies focused on revitalising the night-time economy and encouraging off-peak visitation, LSF initiated a 24-Hour Economy project (Lakeside Festival) as part of its five-year strategic plan. The project was designed to extend the festival's reach and economic impact by activating a broader range of events across a full 24-hour cycle.

This initiative was developed following consultation with local government, tourism operators, and community members as well as analysis of patron surveys. Research showed a clear opportunity to address seasonal downturns and the lack of overnight visitor engagement. By extending festival programming into the evening and early morning, LSF directly supported local businesses, created more performance opportunities for artists, and encouraged multi-day stays.

The 24-Hour Economy project aligns with LSF's mission to promote local talent and deliver cultural, social, and economic benefits to the community. It also supports the broader regional visitor economy by stimulating demand for accommodation, food services, and retail activity.

Key objectives included:

- Expanding the festival to operate across a continuous 24-hour period;
- Increasing overnight visitation and spend;
- Showcasing local and emerging artists;
- Creating family-friendly, inclusive programming;
- Strengthening the cultural identity of Forster/Tuncurry.

Now in its 13th year, Lakeside Festival continues to build on its success and long-standing community support. The 24-Hour Economy initiative has enhanced the festival's value as a sustainable, high-impact event, well-aligned with state and regional economic priorities.

What strategies have been used to foster collaboration and engagement among stakeholders?

Lakeside Festival (LSF) has built strong, long-standing relationships with key local stakeholders. In the lead-up to its 2025 event, LSF has further strengthened ties with the local business community by participating in the Community Partnership Program—an initiative led by the Business NSW Business Chamber. This program has helped foster closer collaboration between LSF and local businesses, enhancing the mutual benefits of shared involvement.

To establish and maintain effective collaboration, LSF has implemented the following strategies:

- Active engagement with the Business NSW Business Chamber, including presentations to members to identify partnership opportunities that support the festival's delivery and objectives.
- Surveys of local businesses to identify shared goals, challenges, and areas for cross-promotion and support.
- Direct consultation with the Economic Development Unit at MidCoast Council to evaluate potential economic outcomes and align festival planning with broader regional development goals.
- Liaison with state and federal government representatives to pursue funding and grant opportunities that support the festival's social, cultural, and economic objectives and ensure alignment with public sector initiatives for regional areas.

These collaborative efforts enable LSF to design and deliver events that reflect the needs and expectations of stakeholders while demonstrating tangible returns on investment—whether financial, promotional, social or cultural. This strategic approach has also contributed to growing support from businesses, government agencies, and the community.

The LSF committee, made up entirely of local volunteers, continues to invest time in consultation and relationship-building to ensure the festival remains a valuable and inclusive regional event. These stakeholder partnerships are critical to its long-term sustainability and success.

Describe how the initiatives from the project have contributed to the growth of the visitor economy.

Key initiatives by Lakeside Festival (LSF), aligned with the 24-Hour Economy strategy, include the introduction of evening and late-night programming. The "Lakeside Laughs" Comedy Night has extended activity beyond daylight hours, driving increased trade for local entertainment venues, restaurants, hotels, and accommodation providers.

A core objective in the LSF Mission Statement is to attract visitors during off-peak periods—a time when local businesses often face reduced revenue. By drawing visitors in quieter months, LSF helps activate otherwise idle resources, supporting more stable business operations. Strong partnerships with local enterprises have resulted in appealing visitor packages that extend stays and increase spend.

The festival's economic impact is well documented. Analysis by Mid Coast Council's Economic Development Unit reported that the 2023 event contributed approximately \$1 million to the local economy and supported both full- and part-time employment. The 2024 Festival generated a 21.4% increase in spending compared to the week before and a 6.25% rise compared to the week after. Ticketing data shows consistent growth in visitation: 33% in 2022, 51% in 2023, and 63% in 2024.

Another key mission objective is to support emerging local talent. LSF achieves this by programming nationally renowned artists, which provides locals access to high-quality performances without travelling to major cities. These headline acts also offer mentoring opportunities for regional artists through direct exposure and feedback.

LSF follows a continuous improvement model, reviewing its operations annually to implement new initiatives and maintain relevance. This evolving approach has delivered growing cultural, social, and economic benefits, reinforcing the Festival's role as a driver of regional prosperity.

Describe any sustainable elements or long-term benefits resulting from the project. How is the organisation ensuring the project legacy continues beyond completion?

Key financial challenges—including rising infrastructure costs, increased artist performance fees, growing marketing expenses, and broader economic pressures—have forced many festivals to cease operations. In response, Lakeside Festival (LSF) has embedded sustainability and resilience into its long-term planning.

A central pillar of LSF's five-year strategic plan is a continuous improvement model. This includes the reinvestment of any surplus funds into future events, ensuring the festival's financial viability and reducing reliance on external funding. This forward-thinking approach secures the event's continuity while building a lasting legacy.

To address rising costs and enhance long-term sustainability, LSF has implemented a series of initiatives designed to increase attendance and reduce operational expenses. A key strategy has been the development of partnerships with the Business NSW Business Chamber and other local organisations. These collaborations have enabled asset sharing and the creation of contra arrangements, where services or resources are exchanged rather than purchased. This not only reduces expenditure but also fosters mutual benefits, such as shared skill sets and access to wider marketing networks through partner databases. These strategic partnerships also support LSF's Mission Statement objective of strengthening the local business community. Cross-promotional opportunities and mutual recognition maximise visibility for all involved, building stronger community connections and economic engagement.

To further enhance sustainability, LSF conducts thorough post-event debriefs, incorporating patron feedback and survey data. These insights help the committee refine operations and explore new, cost-effective approaches. Additionally, ongoing research into consumer trends ensures that festival offerings remain relevant and attractive, supporting steady growth in attendance. By combining continuous improvement with community collaboration and data-driven decision-making, LSF has created a resilient festival model. The event remains accessible to a broad audience through affordable ticketing while delivering high-quality experiences that support the visitor economy. This strategic and adaptable framework ensures that the benefits of the 24-Hour Economy project endure, establishing Lakeside Festival as a cornerstone of regional cultural and economic development well into the future.

Provide measurable evidence of how the project met the identified need and contributed to the growth of the visitor economy.

Lakeside Festival (LSF) delivers a weekend of activities designed to meet the economic, social, and cultural needs of the local community. Its extended programming—spanning both day and night—directly supports the goals of

the 24-Hour Economy project by stimulating business activity beyond typical trading hours and encouraging longer visitor stays. This is further enhanced by the collaboration with the Business NSW Business Chamber which enables the provision of attractive accommodation and service packages for visitors, resulting in extended over-night stays and increased flow-on activity for local businesses.

A key objective in the LSF Mission Statement is to attract visitors during off-peak periods, when local businesses traditionally experience a downturn in activity and revenue. By drawing visitors at these times, the Festival enables local businesses to activate underutilised resources and maintain more consistent revenue streams.

Several data sources confirm that this objective is being met. These include:

- Ticketing data (capturing visitor origin and demographic profiles)
- Patron surveys (identifying overnight stays and accommodation choices)
- Economic modelling by MidCoast Council's Economic Development Unit (quantifying financial impact)
- Anecdotal feedback from social media platforms

This data is reviewed during LSF's post-event debrief and directly informs future planning. Notable findings include:

- Visitor numbers have increased significantly: from 33% in 2022 to 51% in 2023 and 63% in 2024, demonstrating the Festival's growing drawcard effect.
- Economic modelling conducted by MidCoast Council confirmed that the 2023 24-Hour Economy initiative delivered more than \$1 million in economic benefit to the local community and contributed to both full- and part-time employment.
- Trading analysis from the 2024 Festival weekend showed a 21% increase in local business turnover compared with the previous weekend.
- The 2024 event achieved a record financial surplus, which will directly support delivery of the 2025 Festival, enhancing sustainability and securing long-term legacy benefits.

The Festival's evidence-based, adaptive approach has proven effective in meeting the needs identified by the 24-Hour Economy project. Through measurable growth in visitation, economic stimulation, and reinvestment into future events, Lakeside Festival continues to drive regional prosperity while building a resilient and culturally rich local economy.

Log in to enter.businessnsw.com to see complete entry attachments.

BUSINESS NSW