



NSW
TOURISM
Awards

2019
Entrant Handbook

Entrant Handbook

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	4
KEY DATES	4
CONTACT	4
WELCOME.....	5
BENEFITS FOR BUSINESSES.....	6
NSW TOURISM AWARDS PROCESS.....	7
2019 CATEGORIES.....	8
NSW STATE-ONLY AWARDS.....	12
2019 SUMMARY OF CHANGES.....	13
2019 RULES FOR ENTRY	15
ENTRY RULES	15
SUBMISSION RULES.....	17
BUSINESS VERIFICATION VISIT RULES	18
ENTRANT SUPPORT PROGRAM	20
ENTRANTS' HANDBOOK.....	20
ON-DEMAND ONLINE TUTORIALS.....	20
PRE-LODGMET DRAFT SUBMISSION REVIEW	20
YOUR SUBMISSION	21
2019 NOMINATION FEES.....	22
HOW TO ADDRESS GENERAL CRITERIA	27
GENERAL ADVICE ON ADDRESSING SPECIFIC CRITERIA.....	32
BUSINESS VERIFICATION SITE VISIT TIPS.....	34
SECRETS OF THE SUCCESSFUL - HELPFUL HINTS FROM PAST WINNERS	35

Entrant Handbook

INTRODUCTION

From Mullumbimby to Merimbula and beyond, tourism excellence is a proud tradition in the state of New South Wales. The NSW Tourism Awards is a chance to appreciate and celebrate our region's many outstanding tourism operators, as well as a lucrative marketing opportunity for your business.

All submissions are strongly encouraged, and this handbook contains useful information to make the process easier and assist you in preparing a winning submission.

It provides:

- Logistical information and key dates
- Practical submission support for entrants
- Rules of entry
- Guidance on how to plan and write your submission
- Instructions for how to enter online

KEY DATES

2019 NSW Tourism Awards

Event	Date
Nominations Open	Monday 1 April 2019
Entrant Support Available	From Wednesday 1 May 2019
Nominations Due	Friday 28 June 2019
Site visits	July – September 2019
Submission deadline	Tuesday 13 August 2019
Finalists announced	Friday 18 October 2019
2019 NSW Tourism Awards Gala Event	Thursday 14 November 2019
2019 Australian Tourism Awards Gala Event	February 2020 (Canberra)

CONTACT

For more information and queries, please contact:

Nicole O'Donnell
Program Manager, NSW Tourism Awards
 Tourism Industry Division, NSW Business Chamber

Email: admin@nswtourismawards.com.au

Ph: 02 9458 7344

www.nswtourismawards.com.au

Entrant Handbook

WELCOME

Lisa Campbell, 2019 Chair of Judges
NSW Tourism Awards



Now in its 30th year, the NSW Tourism Awards program is an annual celebration of tourism excellence. Tourism operators who have achieved great things in this area over the past 12 months are now invited to prepare a submission and be recognised for your incredible efforts.

Select NSW category winners may even progress to our national program – the Australian Tourism Awards – to compete against finalists from each state and territory.

With 27 categories to choose from, the awards are intended to showcase a diverse cross-section of tourism operators delivering outstanding service to guests in New South Wales. Entry criteria and categories are set by the Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC).

By telling us about your achievements, you're giving your business the opportunity to receive valuable recognition for tourism excellence and innovation at a regional, state and national level. Many past entrants say the process of entering is half the fun and inherently valuable – a fantastic reflective and assessment exercise that helps you appreciate what you have to offer.

No matter how you do, the training, support, site visits (where applicable) and feedback from our experienced support partners and judges equips businesses small and large with valuable business development insights – and the opportunity to benchmark their offering against leading tourism operators.

Good luck and we look forward to celebrating your success in the 2019 NSW Tourism Awards!

Entrant Handbook

BENEFITS FOR BUSINESSES

- ★ A commendation or win boosts your profile in the industry through prestigious public recognition of your business and establishes your reputation as a quality tourism provider.
- ★ Submitting an entry is a diagnostic process that helps you improve your offering and continue to develop excellent business practices.
- ★ Celebrate your hard work, exceptional standards, quality, professionalism and innovation.
- ★ Benchmark your business against peers and competitors.
- ★ Understand the full potential of your business and what you can do to improve your bottom line
- ★ Increase brand awareness and generates marketing opportunities.
- ★ An industry leader can review your draft material prior to official submission, giving you a competitive edge
- ★ Receive valuable feedback on your submission and overall business practices from an experienced judge
- ★ Build your public profile through coverage on multiple media platforms
- ★ Finalists will network with industry peers, colleagues and sponsors at the awards presentation and Gala Event.
- ★ Gold Winners in categories 1–25 will automatically be entered in the Australian Tourism Awards



Image: 2019 NSW Tourism Award Winners with Hon Adam Marshall, Former NSW Tourism Minister

Entrant Handbook

NSW TOURISM AWARDS PROCESS

STAGE 1 NOMINATE YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE

Complete your nomination and pay your entry fee before 28th June 2019 at **online.australiantourismawards.com.au**

Important note: *please be sure to click through to the Australian Tourism Awards - you can complete the business standards questions within the awards portal. Entrants do NOT need to be accredited with the Australian Tourism Accreditation Program or Star Ratings Australia prior to completing their awards submission. All the questions can be found within the portal. Please refer to page 14: 2019 Summary of changes for further information.*

STAGE 2 PLAN YOUR SUBMISSION WITH OUR SUPPORT

Start preparing your submission in line with the [Rules of Entry](#). Maximise your chances of success using the guidance in this handbook and completing the online tutorials.

STAGE 3 PREPARE FOR A SITE VERIFICATION VISIT

A NSW Tourism Awards judge will visit your site between June and August (if applicable). Note: entrants in the Regional Tourism Awards program will receive only one site verification visit (the site verification visit report will be shared with state judges).

STAGE 4 LODGE YOUR SUBMISSION

Lodge your completed submission online at **online.australiantourismawards.com.au** by **5pm on Tuesday 13 August 2019**.

STAGE 5 JUDGING PROCESS COMMENCES

Your submission will be assessed by the judging panel during August and September. An independent auditor will review the judging process and results.

STAGE 6 WINNERS & COMMENDATIONS ANNOUNCED!

NSW Tourism Award Winners and Commendation recipients will be announced at our Gala Event on **Thursday 14 November 2018**.

STAGE 7 SELECT WINNERS BECOME NATIONAL FINALISTS

Winners of categories 1–25 will qualify as Australian Tourism Award finalists.

Entrant Handbook

2019 CATEGORIES

For full category descriptions, questions to answer in your submission and tips, please visit www.nswtourismawards.com.au/About-the-Awards/Categories

1. Major Tourist Attractions

This category recognises natural or built tourist attractions that attract among the highest visitor numbers during the qualifying period for NSW.

2. Tourist Attractions

This category recognises natural or built tourist attractions that attract significant visitor numbers during the qualifying period.

3. Major Festivals & Events

This category recognises leisure festivals, events and exhibitions that enhance the profile/awareness and appeal of the Australian destination they are held in and create economic impact and community involvement for the destination they are held in through the promotion of the destination region and direct visitation to the destination region from event attendees (e.g. increase tourism visitation).

This category is open to (but not limited to) sporting, arts, historical, cultural, literary, humorous, culinary and general interest festivals, events and exhibitions with local, interstate and international visitor attendance over 50,000 or recognised by the STO as a major event on their event calendar.

Not required to have traded for the entire qualifying period, activity must have occurred during the qualifying period. These may be one-off or reoccurring events.

Enter either category 3 or 4.

4. Festivals & Events

This category recognises leisure festivals, events and exhibitions that enhance the profile/awareness and appeal of the Australian destination they are held in and create economic impact and community involvement for the destination they are held in through the promotion of the destination region and direct visitation to the destination region from event attendees (e.g. increase tourism visitation).

This category is open to (but not limited to) sporting, arts, historical, cultural, literary, humorous, culinary and general interest festivals, events and exhibitions with local, interstate and international visitor attendance under 50,000 or NOT recognised by the STO as a major event on their event calendar.

These may be one-off or reoccurring events.

Not required to have traded for the entire qualifying period, activity must have occurred during the qualifying period. Enter either category 3 or 4.

5. Ecotourism

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

Entrant Handbook

6. Cultural Tourism

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

7. Qantas Award for Excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Tourism

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

8. Specialised Tourism Services

This category recognises tourism services/products that enhances the visitor experience.

This category is open to businesses who provide a service or product that: integrates with other tourism products to enhance the visitor experience, OR directly provides a service or product to the visitor that enhances their visitor experience.

Note: Entrants **must not** be eligible for entry against any other category descriptor to submit an entry in 'Specialised Tourism Services'.

Entrants in this category are not permitted to enter any other additional categories.

9. Visitor Information Services

This category recognises the consistent delivery of high quality and face to face information services to the visitor. It is open to Visitor Information Centres/Tourist Offices, Local Tourist Associations and Regional Tourism Organisations.

10. Business Event Venues

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

11. Major Tour and Transport Operators

This category recognises a major contribution to tourism through the combined provision of touring and transport services. It is open to businesses with 15 or more annual fulltime equivalent employees.

12. Tour and Transport Operators

This category recognises a significant contribution to tourism through the combined provision of touring and transport services. It is open to businesses with fewer than 15 annual fulltime equivalent employees.

13. Adventure Tourism

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

14. Destination Marketing

This category recognises creativity and innovation in fully integrated destination marketing activity/campaign (international or domestic) to attract visitors to a region/destination.

The campaign can be a single promotional activity or a series of related promotions delivered by one organisation.

Entrant Handbook

15. Tourism Restaurants and Catering Services

This category is open to 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. Entry is open – but not limited to – hotel or stand-alone restaurants, event caterers, pubs and cafés.

16. Tourism Wineries, Distilleries and Breweries

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

17. Caravan and 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 have obtained a rating of 3 or more in the Caravan Park category within the Awards Accommodation Standards or an official Star Rating of 3 or more in the Caravan Park Accommodation Star Rating category.

18. Hosted Accommodation

This category is open to hosted accommodation that offers a bed & breakfast, farm stay, cottage or other intimate accommodation experience and have obtained a rating of 3 or more in the Awards Accommodation Standards within the Hosted Accommodation category or an official Star Rating of 3 or more in the Hosted Accommodation Star Rating category.

Serviced apartments, hotels and resorts should consider entry into one of categories 21-24 which best fit their product. For companies that are managing multiple self-contained properties it is recommended they focus on one of their properties or enter the Specialised Tourism Services category as a service provider.

19. Unique Accommodation

This category recognises tourism excellence in accommodation providing a unique tourism experience that includes an overnight accommodation experience with an included activity. The focus of this award is on the uniqueness of the tourism experience.

This category is open to properties developed around unconventional accommodation infrastructure that includes an activity (passive or active). Entry is open – but not limited to – tented holidays, houseboats, tree houses, underground accommodation and yacht charters.

Unique Accommodation is not required to have obtained an Awards Accommodation Standards Rating or official Star Rating.

20. 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 have obtained a rating of 3 or more in the Awards Accommodation Standards within one of the following categories - Self Catering, Hosted, Park Accommodation or Serviced Apartment. Or an official Star

Entrant Handbook

Rating of 3 or more in the Self Catering, Hosted, Park Accommodation or Serviced Apartment Star Rating category.

For companies that are managing multiple self-contained properties it is recommended they focus on one of their properties or enter the Specialised Tourism Services category as a service provider.

21. Standard Accommodation

This category recognises all types of accommodation. 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 have obtained a rating of 3 or 3.5 in the Awards Accommodation Standards, or an official Star Rating of 3 or 3.5 in any Star Rating category.

This category is open to accommodation that offers a self-catered accommodation experience and have obtained a rating of 3 or more in the Self Catering, Hosted, Park Accommodation or Serviced Apartment Accommodation Standard category, or an official Star Rating of 3 or more in the Self Catering, Hosted, Park Accommodation or Serviced Apartment Star Rating category.

22. Deluxe Accommodation

This category recognises all types of accommodation. 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 have obtained a rating of 4 or 4.5 in the awards Accommodation Standards, or an official Star Rating of 4 or 4.5 in any Star Rating category.

23. Luxury Accommodation

This category recognises all types of accommodation. 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 have obtained a rating of 5 in the awards Accommodation Standards, or an official Star Rating of 5 in any Star Rating category.

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

25. Excellence in Food Tourism

This category is open to food producers, providores, tour operators, cooking schools, food attractions, farm gate experiences, farmers markets, trails and other food tourism experiences in (state/territory), featuring (state/territory) produce as the core component.

This submission is limited to 8000 words.

Entrant Handbook

NSW STATE-ONLY AWARDS

* These awards are only offered at the NSW Tourism Awards level. Winners will not proceed to the Australian Tourism Awards.

26. Dean Gorddard Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual*

This award recognises the outstanding contribution to the NSW tourism industry by an individual.

Important notes:

- The award will not be made to the same person twice.
- Nominations are accepted from any party except the nominee.
- This category is awarded at the State/Territory level only.
- Applications are made directly to the NSW Tourism Awards Program via admin@nswtourismawards.com.au (not via the awards portal).
- There is no fee to nominate for this award.

27. Tourism Education and Training*

This category is open to individual tourism businesses and tourism education and other registered training providers working to raise professional standards within the tourism industry by delivering tourism training, including online.

28. Excellence in Accessible Tourism*

Accessible tourism is identified as offering a service that invites participation by people of all abilities. This category is open to New South Wales tourism businesses or attractions delivering tourism products or services that are welcoming for people of all abilities. Entrants must demonstrate how they have made a tourism experience more accessible.

The maximum submission length for this category is 8000 words.

Entrant Handbook

2019 SUMMARY OF CHANGES

1. Quality Tourism Framework And Australian Tourism Awards

The Australian Tourism Industry Council are embarking on a new, integrated system for Australia’s tourism industry business development programs which will incorporate existing programs such as the Australian Tourism Accreditation Program, Star Ratings and the Australian Tourism Awards.



This integrated program, known as the Quality Tourism Framework (QTF), will provide greater efficiencies for those who are engaged across multiple programs and provide an assurance of minimum standards being met by all.

For 2019, there are small adaptations to some category descriptors and questions. In addition, the minimum standards of the framework will be incorporated into the question set to ensure that all entries into the awards program are operating legitimately.

To reflect the current industry landscape, changes to the Australian Tourism Awards will come into effect over the next three years. These include adding a consumer review component to the overall scoring system via the online reputation management system ReviewPro, and a comprehensive review of all questions to bring them up to date and ensure category relevance.

2. Quality Tourism Framework Requirements

To be eligible for any of the accommodation categories (17 – 23, excluding 19. Unique Accommodation), all entrants are required to meet a specific Star Rating (dependent on their category), through the completion of a pre-assessment module in your submission portal, which will calculate a proposed rating. Those who are already star rated will not be required to complete a pre-assessment as the rating has already been confirmed. Note: annual Star Rating renewals are due July 2019.

Accommodation category	Star Rating required to enter
Luxury	5 star
Deluxe	4 or 4.5 star
Standard	3 star+
Unique	Not required
Hosted	3 star +
Self Contained	3 star +
Caravan & Holiday Park	3 star +

All entrants in non-accommodation categories are required to complete Level 1 of the QTF. This pre-assessment will be included within the submission portal. Those who are already accredited through QTF (formerly known as ATAP) will not be required to complete a pre-assessment.

There is **no additional cost** for 2019 NSW Tourism Awards entrants to complete the required pre-assessments. Additional costs will only apply if an entrant wishes to finalise the accreditation process through the QTF.

Entrant Handbook

3. Category Changes

Entrants should refer to the 2019 category descriptions - do not refer to criteria specifications and eligibility descriptors from the 2018 (or earlier) NSW Tourism Awards as they no longer apply.

New: Category 28 – Excellence in Accessible Tourism

This category is open to NSW tourism businesses or attractions delivering tourism products or services that are welcoming for people of all abilities. Entrants must demonstrate how they have developed a tourism experience to become more accessible.

Note: This Award is only offered at the NSW Tourism Awards level. Winners in this category will not proceed to the Australian Tourism Awards. Word limit is 8000 words.

4. Inclusion Of Video – Festivals & Events/Destination Marketing Categories Only

There will be an ability to include a link for a video for the Festivals and Events and Destination Marketing categories. Entrants will need to upload their video to a platform such as Youtube and provide the link to the video.

Please Note: There is no score to be awarded.

Entrant Handbook

2019 RULES FOR ENTRY

Entrants are required adhere to the following Rules for Entry in the interest of fairness, and to preserve the integrity of the judging process.

Selecting Your Category

Choose the category that most accurately represents your primary business offering.

Although you are more than welcome to submit an entry for more than one category, a separate submission must be lodged for each category. Exceptions to this rule are the following segments, where entrants may only lodge one submission per category group:

- ★ Attractions – either category 1 or 2 (not both)
- ★ Festivals & Events – either category 3 or 4 (not both)
- ★ Tour Operator – either category 11 or 12 (not both)
- ★ Accommodation – only one from categories 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23;

The Specialised Tourism Services category (8) is reserved for entrants who do not meet the criteria of any other category. Businesses that enter this category may not enter any other categories.

Switching categories after the closing date is not permitted.

ENTRY RULES

1. Qualifying Period

This refers to the applicable financial year, which in this case is 1 July 2018 - 30 June 2019. Key achievements and innovations referenced in your submission must have happened during this time.

2. Trading Period

Entrants are required to have traded for the *entire* 12 months of the qualifying period – except in the case of seasonal businesses and facilities, festivals, events, marketing campaigns, media entries, training and tourism development projects. However, the specific achievements detailed in the submission must have taken place within the qualifying period.

Those who enter the New Tourism Business category must have started trading during the qualifying period (there is no minimum trading period specified).

3. Nominated State/Territory

- a) Entrants must be based or operate in the region, state or territory of their nomination *e.g. New South Wales*
- b) Should a company have branches in more than one state/territory they may choose the most appropriate state/territory to enter based on a single entity. If a company wishes to enter as a group, then they can only enter in one state/territory Awards program and focus on the activities undertaken in that state/territory.

Entrant Handbook

4. Quality Tourism Framework integration – Australian Tourism Awards

If you are accredited through the Quality Tourism Framework (formerly known as the Australian Tourism Accreditation Program), your accreditation will be recognised within the awards process and you won't have to provide it again. Those who do not already have accreditation can answer a series of questions to reassure the program that you meet standard business principles.

Facility questions are included in the submission for **accommodation properties** (except 19. Unique Accommodation). These questions will help entrants align with the correct category and attain an official Star Rating (if they wish to receive one).

Refer to previous section: 2019 Summary of changes

5. Memberships

You do not need to be a NSW Business Chamber tourism member to enter the NSW Tourism Awards. However, nomination fees for the NSW Tourism Awards are **free** for members and tickets to the awards gala event are discounted. NSW Business Chamber members also receive their first year free for accreditation within the Quality Framework. For more information on NSW Business Chamber tourism membership [click here](#)

We highly recommend that NSW operators take advantage of official accreditation programs where available. It is worth mentioning that 80% of gold award winners at the 2018 Australian Tourism Awards achieved accreditation as a [Quality Tourism Accredited Business](#).

6. Multiple Products

An entrant with multiple properties (such as a hotel chain or franchise) must enter each product individually if they want to market each property as a NSW Tourism Award Winner.

The corporate head office of a tourism company may enter, but the NSW Tourism Award Winner logo may only be used by that entity – not its individual offerings.

Apart from the categories specified in rule #1, a business can submit multiple entries in the same category (for separate products). Essentially they will be competing against themselves, but there may be marketing merit in, for instance, coming first and second.

Entrant Handbook

SUBMISSION RULES

This year's NSW Tourism Award submissions are to be submitted electronically at online.qualitytourismaustralia.com/ **by 5pm on Tuesday 13 August 2019.**

a. Each submission must include:

- Nomination details. Please enter details for all available fields in your category.
- Awards submission with supporting images
- An appropriate word count (no longer than specified)
- The submission will be a maximum of 12,500 words
- Food Tourism and Accessible Tourism submissions will be 8000 words in length
- The word limit includes words within a table
- Image captions (up to six words) are not included in the word limit.
- Demonstration of meeting minimum business standards demonstrated via accreditation with QTF Level 1 or Star ratings, if businesses don't have these they must undergo entry level accreditation as part of a question set within their submission.

b. Images

- The submission will include a maximum of 25 images with captions.
- The term images includes infographics, charts, graphs and photographs
- Any image included must be for the sole purpose of providing **evidence** in support of the submission.
- Images cannot be used as part of a written response to a question.
- Captions of up to 6 words are permitted and are not included in the overall word count. Any captions longer than 6 words will count towards the word limit.

c. Short description

Provide a brief description of your company or product not exceeding 100 words. This will be adapted for media, promotional material, website listings and presentation ceremony announcements. Your short description will be edited by individuals who have not seen your submission in its entirety, so please remember to include your company/product name and location.

d. 10 additional images

(JPEG format only- 500 dpi) illustrating your offering should accompany each individual submission. These may be used at the presentation ceremony and in official advertising and publications. *Note: high-resolution images (1920 x 1080 in dimension) are preferred for production purposes.*

Questions you leave unanswered will receive a score of zero. Part-answered questions will be scored based on the information given. Those who feel unable to answer a question are invited to contact the NSW Tourism Awards Program Manager for advice. If you still feel the question is irrelevant to your offering, give your reason in the submission.

An entry that has already been submitted cannot be moved into another category after the submission closing date.

If the nominated business goes into administration, voluntary receivership, liquidation or bankruptcy after lodging a submission, the entrant must notify the NSW Tourism Awards Program Manager. Such a submission will no longer be eligible for an award.

Entrant Handbook

Entry into the NSW Tourism Awards does not equal automatic entry into Australian Tourism Awards. Only award winners in categories 1-25 will automatically become national finalists.

Late submissions will not be accepted.

BUSINESS VERIFICATION VISIT RULES

The purpose of the site visit is for **verification of the business**, not the awards submission. Companies are under no obligation to offer a judge a free experience of their product. The site visit will be prearranged at a mutually convenient time and the judges have a proforma from which they work.

Site verification visits are currently under review and will be released by the end of the nomination period. You will be advised if your business requires a site visit.

The specifics of the site visit are provided to entrants at the time of booking or appointment. Site visits are not scored in NSW.

Site visits are not undertaken for national judging.

Entrants that receive a visit as part of their regional awards submission, do not receive another visit for the NSW Tourism Awards.

New business (not yet accredited) through Quality Tourism Framework (Formerly ATAP or Star Ratings)

If a business is not yet accredited or does not meet their accreditation requirements of the Quality Tourism Framework Level 1, they will be required to undertake an awards site visit. By undertaking an awards site visit they will meet the QTF level one site visit certification requirement.

If a business wishes to obtain a higher level of certification, additional questions would be required to be assessed relevant to the level module of certification, separate to the awards site visit process (this could occur concurrently subject to the judges' availability).

Existing Certified Business (not meeting certification requirements)

Level one

If a business is certified at level one, but is not meeting the QTF Site Visit Certification Requirements they will be required to undertake an Awards Site Visit.

The awards site visit would meet the requirements of a QTF level one certified site assessment.

Entrant Handbook

Site Visit Criteria

Site visit judges will ask to see the following manuals/documentation:

- HR
- Business & Marketing Planning
- Customer Service
- Business Operations
- Risk Management
- Environmental Management

HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

When an entrant is inducted into the NSW Hall of Fame and does not win Gold at the Australian Tourism Awards, they are precluded from entering in that specific category at the NSW Tourism Awards for the following two years.

JUDGES' DECISION

Three members of the judging panel independently score every submission. Results are corroborated by an Independent Auditor and Chair of Judges, who reach an agreement with the judging panel about the winner of each category.

For a category winner to be announced, their submission must be awarded a minimum percentage/score. Being the only entrant in a category does not guarantee victory.

DISCLAIMER

Judges will not be held responsible for any comments made or opinion expressed (overt or implied) concerning the quality of an entrant's submission. By ticking the terms and conditions box, you agree not to bring a claim against any Judge or NSW Tourism Awards representative in relation to feedback on your submission.

Lodging a submission in the NSW Tourism Awards means you authorise the use and/or reproduction of supplied images. By entering, you also authorise the use of your 100-word description for editorial and advertising purposes related to the NSW Tourism Awards and the Australian Tourism Awards.

For promotional purposes, your contact details may be supplied to agencies/sponsors engaged on behalf of the award program.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information you supply in your submission is strictly confidential. All NSW Tourism Awards representatives who come into contact with your submission are required to sign a confidentiality agreement, and at no time will your submission be downloaded.

Entrant Handbook

LODGMET

This year's NSW Tourism Award submissions are to be submitted electronically at online.qualitytourismaustralia.com/ **by 5pm on Tuesday 13 August 2019.**

ENTRANT SUPPORT PROGRAM

Need help preparing your submission? There is plenty available! The NSW Tourism Awards team is pleased to provide a range of FREE support sessions and online resources to help entrants develop their submission.

Find out what support is available at www.nswtourismawards.com.au/support and contact the NSW Program Manager directly if you have any questions.

ENTRANTS' HANDBOOK

Background information, submission guidance and rules for entry are detailed in this Entrants' Handbook. Download the guide from the NSW Tourism Awards website at www.nswtourismawards.com.au

ON-DEMAND ONLINE TUTORIALS

Presented by Natalie Bramble, tourism expert and experienced regional, state and national tourism awards judge, the online entrant tutorials will equip you with:

- An understanding of any changes in the process
- An understanding of how to use the online entry portal
- An overview of awards categories and how to effectively answer questions on business and marketing plans, risk analysis and customer service
- Hints and tips for preparing and writing your submission
- Insights into how to review and analyse your business operations
- Resources to assist you with your submission

PRE-LODGMET DRAFT SUBMISSION REVIEW

Given that awards submissions are thousands of words long, most writers can benefit from a fresh set of eyes – particularly if you've never prepared an awards submission before.

When you've finished writing your submission, an independent past judge can review your final draft and provide written feedback.

The judge will provide constructive feedback in regards to whether your submission adequately addresses criteria, suggest improvements and identify areas that need refining before you lodge your submission.

You will have plenty of time before the final submission date to rework your submission in line with the judge's comments.

Check the [website](#) for information on how to submit your final draft.

Entrant Handbook

YOUR SUBMISSION

NOMINATE

Nominations open 9am on Monday 1 April 2019

Not sure which category to enter? There are 28 to choose from. Perhaps you'd like to choose more than one. Explore the official list of categories and corresponding criteria at <http://www.nswtourismawards.com/About-the-Awards/Categories/>.

Once you've decided, nominate your business at the Australian Tourism Awards online portal **online.australiantourismawards.com.au**.

- Step 1:** Sign up and create an account at **online.australiantourismawards.com.au**
Step 2: Fill in all available fields that relate to your category, including the 100-word description of your company/product.

Take care when entering your business/product/event name. Abbreviations are not recommended.

The name you nominate with will be used on the NSW Tourism Awards website, in promotional material, on certificates and on stage.

For example:

Splendour in the Grass 2019

- X SITG 2019
- X Splendour 2019

Nominations close 5pm Tuesday 13 August 2019

Entrant Handbook

2019 NOMINATION FEES

* Entrants must pay the nomination fee for each individual category entered

	Small business (fewer than 20 employees)	Large business (more than 20 employees)
NSW Business Chamber member	Free entry (member benefit)	Free entry (member benefit)
Local Chamber of Commerce member/ Entrant from Regional Awards Program	\$231 inc. gst	\$324.50 inc. gst
Non-member	\$308 inc. gst	\$434.50 inc. gst

You can pay your entry fee at www.online.australianaward.com.au

Entry is subject to the following terms and conditions. By ticking the terms & conditions box on the Awards Portal, the entrant agrees to the following points:

- The entrant agrees to complete full nomination details and pay the applicable entry fee by **5pm, 28th June 2019**. Payments received after this date will incur a \$150 late registration fee.
- The entrant may withdraw their nomination by notifying the NSW Tourism Awards Coordinator at admin@nswtourismawards.com before **5pm on 13 August 2019 AEST**. Your entry fee will be refunded minus a \$100 administration fee.
- The entrant will forfeit their entry fee in full if they do not advise of their withdrawal from the awards before **5pm on 13 August 2019 AEST**
- The entrant agrees to complete their submission in accordance with the Rules of Entry and lodge it via the Awards portal by **5pm on Tuesday 13 August 2019 AEST**. Submissions lodged after this date will not be considered.

Entrant Handbook

NOW THE FUN PART BEGINS...

PREPARING YOUR SUBMISSION FOR THE NSW TOURISM AWARDS

FIRST THINGS FIRST...

Once you've officially nominated and paid your entry fee, you can begin preparing your submission.

We recommend you read this handbook carefully to understand how the awards program works and what is required from your end.

Make sure you read the **2019 Rules for Entry** on page 14.

Take advantage of the **free entrant support sessions and resources** available (on page 19).

Get in touch with the NSW Tourism Awards Program Manager if you have any queries or concerns (see page 2).



We know you're busy, but it's a good idea to give yourself (or your marketing department) plenty of time to write your submission and gather supporting material.

Preparing your entry well in advance will maximise your chances of success.

Entrant Handbook

SUBSTANCE OVER STYLE

A NOTE ON PRESENTATION

To level the playing field, we've done away with the old formatting rules. This means you no longer need to spend time (or hire a graphic designer) on design and layout to make your submission stand out visually.

WHAT DOES MATTER

- ★ How clear and persuasive your written submission is
- ★ The quality of the photographs you select
- ★ Whether your supporting tables, graphs and charts are relevant and genuinely enhance your submission.

WHAT OUR JUDGES ARE LOOKING FOR

The methodical NSW Tourism Awards judging panel assesses each submission thoroughly and fairly. Here are a few things that impress them:

- ★ Businesses that are operated with care and skill
- ★ Expertise and dedication to providing an industry-leading service
- ★ Sound financials with relevant statements given as evidence
- ★ Creativity, innovation and out-of-the-box industry disruption
- ★ Respect for history and tradition demonstrated through restoration and educational initiatives
- ★ Knowledge of competitors and the broader tourism industry
- ★ Businesses that set solid goals and KPIs
- ★ Infection energy and enthusiasm that leaps off the page
- ★ Clean content devoid of spelling, grammatical and factual errors

WOW THE JUDGES WITH:

- ★ Fabulous business ideas you've implemented
- ★ Concise, carefully thought out responses
- ★ Heartfelt stories behind your offering
- ★ Attributed customer testimonials
- ★ Photographs that set the scene
- ★ Simple tables, charts and graphs
- ★ Tangible improvements you've made
- ★ Challenges you've overcome

JUDGES ARE PUT OFF BY:

- ⊗ Claims without supporting evidence
- ⊗ Unanswered questions
- ⊗ Difficult-to-understand responses
- ⊗ Responses that fail to address the question
- ⊗ Attacks on competitors
- ⊗ Overlong responses
- ⊗ Submissions cut-and-pasted from existing material
- ⊗ Sloppy submissions that appear hastily prepared

Entrant Handbook

HOW MUCH BACKGROUND SHOULD I GIVE?

We understand that you're so close to your business it can be challenging to frame it objectively. Assume that the person assessing your submission knows nothing about your offering. Approach this task as you would if you were at a BBQ and someone said: 'What do you do?'

Tell them what they need to know in simple, engaging terms following the general journalistic structure of: **who, what, when, where**.

Above all, let your love of what you do shine through when telling your story. Responses that express your genuine passion for how you contribute to the tourism industry will always be highly regarded.

Keep in mind that you are writing for a national audience and give it everything you've got!

HOW DO I MAKE EVERY WORD COUNT?

Remember that word count is important. Be careful when allocating your words because every one should work as hard as possible. Succinct, clear responses are preferable to waffling answers that go nowhere. In general, clarity wins over cleverness when making your case.

REMEMBER: NO SUBMISSION IS COMPLETE WITHOUT EVIDENCE

Making claims about facts like increased revenue, attendance or unique visitors to your website? Make sure you include documentary evidence to support every claim you make within your submission.

While NSW Tourism Awards judges will visit your premises to verify certain facts about your business (depending on your category), it's important to provide supporting material for factual claims you make in your submission.



Use acronyms with care. The first time you use an acronym, you must define it: 'the New south Wales Business Chamber (NSWBC...' Again, our judges are from all over Australia so they won't necessarily know what you're talking about when you reference the RTO or DNSW.

Entrant Handbook

Is There A Difference Between A Statement And An Answer?

Indeed there is! Keep in mind that judges want the latter and not the former. Be specific when you construct your answers. Avoid generalities and offer explanations.

Firstly, address the question directly and fortify your answer with demonstrable facts and figures where possible.

The **difference between statements and answers** can be illustrated with a few examples:

STATEMENT

Business has doubled in recent years due to a number of factors

ANSWER

New visitors to our property have risen by 102% per cent since January 2018. We have accomplished this through a targeted growth strategy and a digital campaign that included:

- Keeping in touch with past guests via email to tell them about news and special offers
- A \$xxxxxx renovation to refresh the appearance of the property
- A \$xx investment in Google ads
- Gently encouraging guests who enjoyed their stay to leave reviews

STATEMENT

- Our efforts to create a positive company culture have paid off

ANSWER

In 2018, we focused our attention on creating a positive company culture where staff love coming to work. These efforts included:

- Fortnightly check-ins with team members
- Regular team-building days
- Encouraging a healthy life-work balance
- Providing flexible working conditions for parents.
- As a result of these initiatives, staff turnover decreased by xx%.

STATEMENT

We invested in automation to increase efficiencies in the business.

ANSWER

To minimise the manual labour involved in checking people in or finding them the best room rate available, we investigated software programs that could automate these processes. We rolled out the software program xx, which resulted in:

- A 10-minute saving per guest during check-in
- Staff spending less time on manual entry and more time focusing on customers
- An improved Google Review rating of .5 points, with reviewers noting how fast and efficient our processes were.

Entrant Handbook

HOW TO ADDRESS GENERAL CRITERIA

The below information is intended as a benchmark for how judges assess award submissions, and is based on Category 2 — Tourist Attractions.

Please note that each category has specific questions relevant to that sector, so the information below should be used as a guide only. We recommend that entrants refer to the criteria and tips for additional insight into what's expected of them.

Tourism Excellence (20 marks)

- a) Demonstrate your eligibility for this category as related to the descriptor above and provide a brief overview on the nature and history of the business. (6)
- b) What tourism products, experiences and services do you offer visitors? (6)
- c) Describe your commitment to tourism excellence. (4)
- d) Describe your involvement in the tourism industry. (4)

A highly rated submission will:

- ★ Demonstrate proof of your eligibility for this category as defined in the category descriptor.
- ★ Allow the judges to immediately understand what you do and where you fit in
- ★ Let judges get a sense of your passion and expertise
- ★ Communicate the history of the business: why it was launched, who the founders are and how it has grown and evolved over the years. You could include a timeline of key milestones achieved from inception (i.e. upgrades, changes in ownership, new facilities)
- ★ Include details such as where the business is located and include a map that clearly details the location in relation to a major population centre (this will allow a judge that doesn't know your area to orient themselves).
- ★ Describe the workforce behind the business i.e. how many people are employed full-time, part-time or casual. You could include an organisational chart.
- ★ Describe what tourism excellence means to you and how you encourage it in your business.
- ★ List awards, nominations, accreditations that the business or staff have achieved.
- ★ List your core business values and/or philosophy behind your business
- ★ Explain your involvement in the wider tourism industry at a regional/ state/ national level. For instance: what memberships do you have? What tourism related boards to company directors or staff sit on? Do you collaborate with other businesses? Do you offer families to media, influencers or the corporate sector? Have you attended Destination NSW workshops or other professional development activities? Have you attended the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards or the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE)?



Write with PASSION. Show the judges you are passionate and excited by your own business and the achievements you have made up to now. The response should

Entrant Handbook

Business Planning (20 marks)

- a) Provide an overview of the key features of your business plan including goals, strategies and outcomes. (6)
- b) Describe any innovations that have taken place during the qualifying period to improve your tourism business and demonstrate how these innovations enhance your tourism experiences/services. (6)
- c) What investment has been made in staff training and development and how has this improved the services provided to your visitors? (4)
- d) Describe the main risks for your tourism business and the risk mitigation measures you have implemented. (4)

A highly rated submission will:

- ★ Introduce this section with your mission and/or vision statement.
- ★ List your business goals, strategies and outcomes simply and clearly in a way that's easy to understand (a table is recommended), focusing on **what you wanted to achieve, what you did** and **what the results were**.
- ★ Draw a clear line between goals and outcomes. For instance, our goal was to increase average restaurant spend from \$xx to \$xxx. Our strategy included xxxx. After xx months, average spend had increased to \$xxxx.
- ★ Briefly touch on your KPIs for separate areas of the business.
- ★ Describe how you invest in your staff in terms of professional development and career progression. Link this back to how this has improved the service you offer to visitors overall. Investment does not need to be financial (hours/days, decrease in staff turnover etc)
- ★ Reference hard facts and figures and substantiate these with evidence. Talk about %, \$, and X number of guests.
- ★ Detail new innovations you have implemented, why you did so and what ROI these have generated. In addition to innovations in relation to the product, include innovations in the areas of marketing, packaging, human resources, waste management, accounting systems (streamlined processes) maintenance or the environment. Think about the impact on the business and the experience for the customer experience.
- ★ Explain how you have identified and manage risk in your business, detailing specific strategies and concrete examples. Consider all aspects of business risk not just workplace health and safety i.e. financial (bad debts, cash flow, funding, fraud), intellectual property, human resources (staff turnover, loss of owners, key staff), operational, marketing, environmental, external economic events, emergence of competitors, theft, etc. Use a 3-column table to display the information.
- ★ Show evidence of continuous review and improvement of your risk management strategy.



When thinking about innovations... brainstorm amongst the team and look at the various components of the business. Include a case study to showcase the impact an innovation made to the business and the visitor experience.

If you don't have a risk management plan for your business, the Australian Government has some excellent tools to assist: <https://www.business.gov.au/risk-management/risk-assessment-and-planning>

Entrant Handbook

Marketing (25 marks)

- a) Who are your target markets? (5)
- b) How do you know your product/service meets the needs of your target markets? (5)
- c) What are your unique selling points and demonstrate how you communicate these to your target markets? (5)
- d) Describe the innovative marketing strategies you have implemented to encourage new and/or repeat business. (5)
- e) Demonstrate the success of these initiatives outlined in (d). (5)

A highly rated submission will:

- ★ Describe the target audience for your business in terms of age, geographic location, where they search for travel options and what they respond to in terms of customer experience.
- ★ Explain how your offering gives this particular target everything they're looking for. For example, young families. How do you provide a family-friendly offering where there's something for everyone?
- ★ Give details of any market research you've conducted to learn more about your target market and what matters to them.
- ★ Provide examples of research, feedback, data from past visitation, focus groups, emerging market trends and/or current market changes to back up the response.
- ★ Talk about what sets your business apart from competitors – your unique selling points and how you capitalise on this through marketing
- ★ Run through any innovative marketing strategies (aside from traditional activities such as brochures and print ads) that you've implemented and corresponding outcomes.
- ★ Include charts, graphs and/or tables that visually represent your marketing wins and ensure they are clearly labelled
- ★ Double-check that your answer addresses every facet of the question.



Including a competitor analysis table could assist to clearly demonstrate your USPs.

Entrant Handbook

Customer Service (20 marks)

- a) Describe your customer service philosophy/values. (5)
- b) Explain how you provide for guests/visitors with specific needs (5)
- c) Describe how you measure customer satisfaction and identify areas for improvement. (5)
- d) What processes do you have in place to respond to customers' complaints both online and offline, and manage your online reputation? (5)

A highly rated submission will:

- ★ Demonstrate customer service as a core component of the vision or mission of the business
- ★ Focus on specific business practices you have in place to ensure exceptional customer service (for example, quality assurance (QA) checks on prepared accommodation rooms).
- ★ Give examples of your customers with special needs and how you have gone above and beyond to accommodate these (Accommodation example: We have a ground floor apartment that is custom-designed to be wheelchair accessible. Would you like a travel cot set up in your room? Have you heard about our new vegetarian menu with 5 vegan options?)
- ★ Differentiate specific needs by:
 - age (seniors or very young children)
 - travel group (groups, singles, couples, families)
 - motivation for travel (business or pleasure, romance, getaway)
 - heritage and/or religion etc.
 - mobility issues, including wheelchairs and walking aids
 - large or special interest groups
 - impaired vision or hearing
 - dietary requirements
 - intellectual disabilities
 - sensory sensitivities
 - non-English speaking visitors etc
- ★ Describe how you empower your staff to respond to complaints – whether in person or online
- ★ Explain how you manage your online reputation in the face of negative reviews and public social media posts.
- ★ Go into how you measure customer satisfaction. What is your metric? Examples of methods to measure customer satisfaction include:
 - Feedback and/or guest comment forms
 - Guest books
 - Formal research methods such as surveys - hard copy or online; or focus groups
 - Monitoring social media, including blogs
 - Mystery shoppers
 - Informal discussions with clients
 - Word-of-mouth from external sources, such as visitor information centres, regional tourism representatives, industry partners such as wholesalers, referrals from other tourism operators etc.
- ★ Be sure to include the results of the methods above and excerpts of guest comments as testimonials.
- ★ Mention how you respond to positive feedback and engage with customers to encourage repeat business.

Entrant Handbook



Testimonials and case studies are a great way to back up your answer about customer service. They could be from staff, suppliers, community members – not only customers. Include an example of how negative feedback was turned into a positive change for the business and improved customer experience.

Sustainability (15 marks)

- Demonstrate how your business contributes to the local economy. (5)
- Demonstrate how your business engages with and brings benefits to the local community. (5)
- Describe how your business cares for the local environment. (5)

A highly rated submission will:

- Talk about how your business contributes to the local economy. Do you source only local produce? Employ x number of people in the region? Cross-promote with other local businesses?
- Mention dollar values and percentages to give judges a clearer picture of your contribution.
- Explain how you engage with and give back to your local community. Do you sponsor local schools, run a work experience program for students in the area or donate to local charities? Perhaps you donate leftovers to a homeless shelter or provide discounted services for veterans.
- Describe strategies you have in place to minimise your environmental impact. Have you invested in water-wise laundry solutions? Have you recently switched to a renewable energy source
- Provide illustrative graphs, charts or testimonials to support your level of community engagement and environmental strategies.



Quantify your responses wherever possible in this section and demonstrate success from year to year by showing growth over time.

Entrant Handbook

GENERAL ADVICE ON ADDRESSING SPECIFIC CRITERIA

Clues on how to answer specific criteria can be found in the **category title** and **description**

Example:

Category 3 — Major Festivals & Events

This category recognises leisure festivals, events and exhibitions that enhance the profile/awareness and appeal of the Australian destination they are held in and create economic impact and community involvement for the destination they are held in through the promotion of the destination region and direct visitation to the destination region from event attendees (e.g. increase tourism visitation).

The first thing we suggest you do is ensure the category reflects what you have to offer as a business. This may sound obvious, but it's true that some category titles and descriptions are open to interpretation.

Once you've confirmed that you are in the right category, zero in on pivotal words that are likely to inform the criteria. In this case, they are:

- Economic impact
- Community involvement
- Increase visitation
- Enhance awareness/appeal
- Destination profile

The next step is to analyse the language used in the category questions when writing your submission. Typically, your focus will be revealed in the first word or two. Another example from the Major Festivals & Events category.

Sustainability

a) **How does your festival/event involve and inspire your local community?**

Here, you should address the 'how' by describing the positive social impact your festival or event has on the local community. Select interesting examples to elaborate on, remembering that 'inspiring your local community' also encompasses how your offering boosts the local economy and stimulates spending.

b) **Demonstrate your commitment to environmental sustainability.**

In this case, you should first affirm your commitment to environmental sustainability and preserving the beauty of the region (to show that you are indeed committed). Next comes the 'demonstration' component, where you detail the activities you conduct in relation to water conservation, waste management and recycling, fuel and energy reduction, and carbon reduction/offset. Where possible, include a measurement/evidence of how the activity has reduced your environmental footprint.

Entrant Handbook

c) What plans do you have in place to ensure the future sustainability of the event?

This is an invitation to show that your commitment to the community and the environment is long term. Detail future initiatives in the pipeline. Perhaps your aim is to reduce waste by xx% by 2025? Maybe you want to launch a local scholarship program for talented young musicians in your area? Or switch to solar as soon as you raise enough funds. Persuade the judges that your plans are well thought out and, where applicable, have been formulated in consultation with stakeholders, staff and the community.

How do I address specific needs criteria?

Several of the categories ask:

'What services do you provide for visitors with disabilities and specific needs (eg. language assistance, food allergies)?'

This question is two-fold:

1. What services do your business offer for patrons with disabilities or special needs?
2. What services does your business offer for patrons with *specific* needs? (Those with English as a second language, parents with infant children, the elderly, etc.).

Many successful past entrants have addressed this criterion using an easy-to-understand table:

Disabilities	Specific needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Entire property is wheelchair accessible via a purpose-built elevators and ramps ★ We personally escort visitors with impaired vision and accommodate guide dogs ★ Major signage is in large-print format and braille ★ 3 x rooms are fully equipped with rails and accessible bathrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Kids' club operates 6am-9pm ★ Restaurant menu caters to all dietary requirements ★ 4 x languages spoken by front-of-house staff ★ Pool safety signage in 3 x languages ★ 24-hour check-in available for guests arriving at odd hours

Include the benefit of the changes/modifications/additions to service/infrastructure for the business, your customers or stakeholders. For example the business has injected \$xxx into renovations to refresh the appearance...this could be extended as a response to include that the refresh has generated interest from new markets or increased return business. Judges look for quantifiable outcomes as well as the action of change.

Entrant Handbook

BUSINESS VERIFICATION SITE VISIT TIPS

Set aside around 1.5 hours for the visit, remembering that the verification officer needs time to thoroughly assess your business practices to ensure it meets Quality Tourism standards.

If possible, designate at least 2 staff members to host the visit. The person preparing your award submission or someone on your marketing team would be a good choice.

During the visit, the verification officer will provide informal feedback on your business. If your memories are anything like ours, we recommend taking notes or recording their advice so you can implement it later if you wish to.

Part of the visit involves reviewing documentation. We suggest having everything ready in advance and giving them time to do this at the beginning of the visit.

Update your policies and procedures in preparation for the visit.

Once the verification officer has sighted the documentation, use the remainder of the visit to show them the very best of what you have to offer.

Having said that, keep in mind that these officers are not media/influencers/VIPs who are there for the red carpet treatment. Their purpose is to verify your offering.

Closer to the time you will be provided a full list of requirements to help you prepare.

Entrant Handbook

SECRETS OF THE SUCCESSFUL - HELPFUL HINTS FROM PAST WINNERS

Remember these gold nuggets and need-to-know tips

★ Read the Rules Carefully

The rules exist to level the playing field and help you answer questions to the best of your ability.

★ Let the Question Guide Your Answer

It's important to respond specifically to the question asked and resist the temptation to go off on a tangent. Re-read all your answers to ensure there are no flat statements.

★ Focus On Tourism

Never lose sight of the fact that these are tourism awards – not business awards or any other kind of awards. If, for example, your hotel hosts a lot of corporate conferences, this is only relevant if you can relate it back to tourism.

★ Back Your Claims

Give credence to all claims you make with supporting evidence. This is where statistics, percentages and dollar values are helpful. Make sure all financial data is verified by a qualified third party or sign a Statutory Declaration.

★ Tell Your Story

When it comes to persuading judges, your excitement about your business is infectious. Use your submission to paint a bright and colourful picture of why you do what you do and how this contributes to tourism. Start from the very beginning, remembering that judges may never have heard of your business.

★ Just Be Honest

Our judges are experienced industry operatives who know exaggeration when they see it. Plus, there's honour in being the little guy. Some entrants believe pretending to be bigger than they are will help them succeed, but this is certainly not the case. The panel understands the realities of the industry and will refer to notes from your site verification visit.

★ Clarity Is Key

While you want to be descriptive, make sure you are also crystal clear in what you're saying. Have someone you trust proofread and 'sense-check' your submission for continuity and quality assurance.

★ Shine Your Best Light

Your submission should be a celebration of your organisation's very best features. What are your strengths? Where have you shown initiative? Creativity? Spotted a gap in the market no one else was aware of?

★ Money Can't Buy Success

When preparing your submission, our advice is to do the best you can with one caveat – simplicity is key. This is not something you want to invest heavily into because there is no correlation between money spent and success. As we said above, bigger is not always better. Brilliant little businesses win just as often as large chains with big budgets.

★ Illustrate with supporting material

Enhance your submission with easy-to-understand tables, graphs and diagrams that give insights into your growth and trajectory. Photographs should be high-quality and relevant to your written material. Avoid providing anything irrelevant or unexplained.

★ Each question has its own set of tips

Tips are included to help you answer each question at

<http://www.nswtourismawards.com/About-the-Awards/Categories>.

When formulating your response, read the tips first because they serve as a ready-made checklist.

★ We're Here To Help

The NSW Tourism Awards team is here to assist you every step of the way. If you have any questions or you get stuck, please don't hesitate to phone us so you can move on with writing your submission. We would much prefer that you call than waste time worrying.