Shoalhaven Business Awards 2017

FRIDAY 25th AUGUST 2017

Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre

AWARD ENTRY INFO PACK

17 May 2017

















> “Winning has helped us become more visible in both the business and local communities.
>
> Tess Thomas, HopDog BeerWorks

CONGRATULATIONS

ON YOUR DECISION TO ENTER THE AWARDS

Just by entering the Awards you are giving yourself the opportunity to review your business operations, reconnect with your vision and strategy, and measure performance against objectives.

Many entrants see the Awards as a time for forced self-assessment, which helps keep them accountable to their goals.

It is an opportunity to engage with your team and collectively brainstorm the strategy for your entry.

You are also giving yourself the opportunity to represent the Shoalhaven in the Illawarra Awards, and as we have seen in the past, even the State Awards (if you enter an aligned category).

This pack will give you all the information you need to understand the entry process and complete your Award entry.

If you read this pack in 2016, it is essential you read it again as there have been a number of changes.

It is our intent to make the process of entering as easy and enjoyable as possible. This is why we create this pack, and why we are sharing tips and support for entering via as many channels as possible.

You can find help in this pack, on our website, via the exciting new Awards Insider podcast, our workshop, our Facebook page and our newsletter.

Please make sure you like and follow the Chamber's Facebook page for regular and important updates.

About the Awards

The Shoalhaven Business Awards is the region's most anticipated annual business event.

The Awards are about so much more than just winning. In addition to recognising and honouring the most outstanding businesses in the region, they provide an opportunity to celebrate the combined success of the Shoalhaven business community.

The pinnacle of the business year, the Awards provide unrivalled networking opportunities, the chance to share remarkable stories, and ongoing brand exposure to the entire region.

For entrants, the Awards provide a platform for reviewing business operations with fresh eyes, as well as the eyes and minds of experts. They put a spotlight on the region, showcasing the success stories of our most outstanding businesses, and market the Shoalhaven as an investment destination.

Several categories are aligned with the Illawarra Awards, as well as the NSW state Awards, meaning a number of Shoalhaven businesses will be given the opportunity to compete in larger award programs and bring further recognition for the Shoalhaven.

In 2016 our Awards program enjoyed renewed energy and interest from the business community. We implemented a workshop program to help businesses enter, we introduced two new Awards that recognised our most socially aware businesses, and tickets to the Gala sold out three weeks ahead of the event. We used local businesses, suppliers and individuals to help bring together what was, our best Awards yet.

Held at the Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre, the Awards is an accessible event.

For sponsorship enquiries and information about entering the Awards contact
Miranda Packer, Awards Manager
awards@shoalhavenbusiness.com.au or 0418885550.

Read more at www.shoalhavenbusinesschamber.com.au/awards

Awards theme

Our Awards theme this year is 'Cultivate'.

In the Shoalhaven, we have the talent, drive and passion to ensure we succeed in keeping our region as the best place to live and work, now and in the future.

But we need to nurture the opportunities on our horizon, we need to support and encourage our businesses and our entrepreneurial spirit through strong vision, passion, collaboration, trust, and business relationships.

The future of the Shoalhaven is exciting, but like any successful crop, we need to tend to it, with the intent to foster growth.

Key dates

Wednesday 17 May	Awards launched and entries open
Wednesday 14 June	Awards entry workshop
Tuesday 27 June	Awards entries close
Thursday 20 July	Finalists announced & interview period commences
Tuesday 8 August	Interview period closes/judging completed
Thursday 10 August	Awards Finalists' and Sponsors Evening
Friday 25 August	Awards Gala night

Contacts

For questions about entering, please contact:

Miranda Packer, Awards Manager
awards@shoalhavenbusiness.com.au
0418 885 550

For portal or password assistance, please contact

NSW Business Chamber Member Support Centre
1300 139 910





cultivate

Pronunciation: kʌltɪveɪt

the act of nurturing with the intent to foster growth





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Finalists' Evening sponsor

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Bomaderry Bowling Club Worth Going Out Of Your Way For

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Categories

We have 19 awards this year, 16 of which you can directly enter.

What does this mean?
This year, in addition to Business of the Year, we have two further awards that cannot be directly entered – 'Excellence in Inclusion' and 'Excellence in Social Responsibility'. Refer to page 8 and 9 for more information on these Awards.

Similarly to how we select Business of the Year, finalists for these two categories will be garnered from each of the 'open' categories. Two additional questions exist in each business-oriented category (i.e. excludes Business Leader, Young Entrepreneur and Young Business Executive) and the responses to these questions will be assessed to determine finalists for interviews.

Aligned categories

The winners of these categories will go on to represent the Shoalhaven and compete in the Illawarra Business Awards.

- Business Leader
- Young Business Executive
- Young Entrepreneur
- Excellence in Business
- Employer of Choice
- Excellence in Innovation
- Excellence in Small Business
- Excellence in Sustainability
- Start Up Superstar*

*This Award is new for 2017 and replaces Outstanding New Business. Please see Page 24 for more information on Start Up Superstar.

Non-aligned categories

These categories are specific to the Shoalhaven Awards, and are not included in the aligned Illawarra or NSW Awards.

- Excellence in Production
- Excellence in Professional & Commercial
- Excellence in Retail & Personal Services
- Outstanding Home Based Business
- Excellence in Community Service
- Excellence in Tourism & Hospitality
- Excellence in Inclusion
- Excellence in Social Responsibility
- Employee of the Year**
- Business of The Year

** This category is new for 2017 and it is an employer nominated category. Please see Page 34 for more information.

Please see page 35 for more information
^Please see page 36 for more information

How to enter

Using the portal

Entries are completed online using the NSW Business Chamber awards entry portal. The URL for the portal is www.businessannualawards.com.au/login?chamber=shoalhaven

Please note that the portal has undergone a number of changes this year, and as a result, every user MUST create a new profile, regardless of whether you have entered before.

This also means your historic data is not available within the portal.

After setting up your profile, if you forget your password simply select the Forgot Password option which is located on the log in page of the awards portal.

Supported browsers for using the portal include:

Firefox 34 and higher
Internet Explorer 9 and higher
Chrome 39 and higher
Safari (Mac only) 7.1 and higher
Opera 26 and higher

There is a very detailed portal user guide available on the NSW Business Chamber's website, link here via digital PDF, or type this URL into your browser: https://www.businessannualawards.com.au/nswbcap/media/media/Banners/How-to-Guide-Business-Awards-Portal.pdf.

Business Propel diagnostic

Every entrant into the Awards is entitled to a complimentary business diagnostic that provides you with an overview of where your business is performing well, as well as recommendations on how your business can improve to support your business growth and success.

The diagnostic takes approximately 10 minutes to complete and will be assessed by the NSW Business Chamber using international business benchmarks.

While the diagnostic is not essential, we recommend you complete and then attach the report in this section of your award entry. In addition to providing useful insights into your business, the judges highly regard those businesses that invest ten minutes of their time to undertake the diagnostic.

Learn more about the diagnostic here or watch a quick video on it here.

Entry writing tips

- Aim to stand out from the crowd. Judges are assessing so many entries; you want yours to be different and be enjoyable to read
- Tell a story with your responses. Storytelling is one of the best ways to captivate hearts and minds and to ensure your entry is memorable
- Re-read the question as you are answering it. Are you addressing precisely what is being asked? This is critical to judges in assessing and scoring your entry.
- Use clear, concise language. Short, succinct sentences are much easier to read than long wordy ones.
- Check your spelling and grammar – get someone else to review your entry, ideally someone with great attention to detail as well as a strong grasp of the English language.
- Work within the minimum and maximum word limits.
- Reference evidence – awards, testimonials etc. Although you can't attach documents in the portal, you can reference them and if required, bring them to your interview.
- Download and print a PDF of your entry from within the portal, and conduct a final review before submitting.

Please note: as stated in the questions, all entries will be based on the success of the past 12 - 24 months only.

UOW student support

This year we have requested expressions of interest from suitably skilled UOW Marketing & Communications students to assist businesses with writing their entries. Your written entry plays a crucial role in your submission. Not only is it assessed to determine whether you become a finalist, but it also forms part of your final assessment, along with the interview.

Plenty of successful people have poor spelling, poor grammar, poor sentence structure, or don't know how to effectively and convincingly use the English language to their advantage. One of the most iconic entrepreneurs of our time, Richard Branson, suffers from dyslexia and is the first to admit that his spelling is far from perfect.

If any of this sounds like you, consider partnering with a UOW student to assist with the writing element of your submission. You will be giving yourself the best possible chance of creating a winning entry.

Email awards@shoalhavenbusiness.com.au or call Miranda Packer on 0418 885 550 to find out more.

Benefits of entering

Review your business

The benefits of entering the Awards extend well beyond winning and glory. As a process of entering the Awards, you will review your business operations, reconnect with your vision and strategy, and measure performance against objectives. Many entrants see the Awards as a time for forced self-assessment, which helps keep them accountable to their goals.

Celebrate success

Your business is successful because of the people you have in it. Entering the Awards is a great way to review the past 12 months, involving and recognising those who have contributed to the success of your business.

Reward & recognition

Bringing your staff to the Awards Gala is a great opportunity to recognise and reward your team for the role they play in making your business a success.

A sense of pride for your team

Working for a recognised or awarded business is great for your team. Who doesn't like working for a business that is considered to be among the best? Our finalists all gain recognition as part of the Awards lead up and follow up; think about what that might mean for your team.

Identify areas for development

Participating in the Awards is a great way to see what your peers and your competition are doing, and consider areas for improvement in your own business.

Put a spotlight on passion

There are many businesses that are doing something really outstanding, really valuable, or really unique, and often it goes unnoticed. Entering the Awards is an opportunity to bring awareness to the work you are doing, and may have benefits that you never imagined. .

Represent the Shoalhaven

Winners of the aligned category Awards will go on to the Illawarra Business Awards and compete against businesses in the Illawarra region. Winners of those Awards then go on to the NSW State Awards, an extremely prestigious opportunity. Representing your business, and the Shoalhaven, at the State Awards is a great way to earn free PR for your business.



> Just by entering, your business will benefit in ways you could not imagine.
>
> Matt Simms, Simmark

A few words from our Awards Ambassadors

> Never before has there been so much support available for entering, and for producing outstanding entries
>
> Peter Russell, Integrity Real Estate



Awards Insider podcast

Acting on feedback from entrants and judges alike, this year we are seeking to equip you with as many tools and as much information as possible to enable you to craft a winning entry.

Sponsored by TAFE NSW, the Awards Insider podcast series has been purposefully created to enable easy consumption of a LOT of information.

We have created a 9 episode series where we interview a range of experts who have won, judged or supported awards programs across the country.

Each episode is around 15 minutes in length and focuses on a different topic.

Topics covered in the podcast series

- Episode 1 - Matt Simms, Awards Ambassador - Benefits of entering and how Simmark leverages entering and celebrating for the betterment of his business
- Episode 2 - Pete Russell, Awards Ambassador - Benefits of entering and how Integrity Real Estate grew as a direct result of entering the Awards
- Episode 3 - Raj Ray, Chair of Judges - Planning and Preparation: A "how to" guide to entering
- Episode 4 - Rosemary Gillespie, Proof Communications Director - Top tips from a professional Awards submission writer
- Episode 5 - Lisa Burling, LBPR Director and multiple business award winner: The Power of storytelling: How you should build your story into your entry
- Episode 6 - Marie Persson, Telstra Business Awards judge - Be a zebra among horses: how to stand out from the crowd
- Episode 7 - Robbie Collins, Head of UOW Shoalhaven - Why you need to attend the workshop
- Episode 8 - Jamie McAinsh, The Marketing Clan - Your brand voice: Why you need to use a voice that is uniquely yours, and one that considers tone, language, grammar and jargon
- Episode 9 - Warwick Shanks, Head Judge, Illawarra Business Awards - Preparing for interview: How to completely captivate the judges

The show is hosted by Chance Hanlon and Miranda Packer and has been recorded professionally in the HEV Studios in Bomaderry.

The podcast is available for download in the iTunes Store and for direct listen on the Chamber's website.

Awards entry workshop

Last year we ran the first ever Award Entry Workshops. Feedback was really positive, and a number of the participants won Awards. But what participants said they really wanted was assistance with their category questions. They wanted help on how to address the entry questions, and understand whether their proposed response would be what the judges are looking for.

So this year, following feedback, we have changed the way we offer support so that we can still share helpful tips, but give entrants one-on-one help with their entries. All our tips and insights are shared via the TAFE NSW sponsored Awards Insider podcast.

The workshop will be more hands on. The purpose is to equip entrants with the education, tools and support required to produce an outstanding award entry.

If you want to hear more about what we will cover in the workshop, and why you should attend, listen to episode 7 of the Awards Insider podcast. Chance and Miranda talk with Robbie Collins, Head of UOW Shoalhaven about the benefits of gaining one-on-one assistance with your entry.

By allocating time to attend the workshops, you will give yourself the best possible chance of producing an outstanding entry.

The following people will be available at the workshop to answer all your questions:
Raj Ray - Chair of Judges
Robbie Collins - Head of UOW Shoalhaven and past Awards judge for many years
Peter Masterson - past Awards judge for many years
Brendan Goddard -President, Shoalhaven Business Chamber
Miranda Packer - Awards Manager

Workshop format

- Quick recap of topics covered in the podcast
- Any common questions we've received from entrants via phone or email
- Group Q&A time
- Work on actual entries, asking your own questions direct to our support team

Workshop date
Wednesday 14th June
9.30am – 11.00am

Workshop venue
Room TBC
University of Wollongong Shoalhaven
Glen Evans Rd
West Nowra

If you want to create a winning entry, you need to register for our workshop. To register, please email admin@shoalhavenbusiness.com.au or call Lucy at the SBC office on 4423 3582.

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Shoalhaven

Judging process

Who are the judges?

The judges are an independent panel of business owners, business professionals and government representatives from the Shoalhaven and surrounding regions.

How are they appointed?

The Shoalhaven Business Chamber and the Chair of Judges jointly appoint the judges.

Who is the Chair of Judges?

The Chair of Judges is Raj Ray. Raj has been appointed by the Chair of the Shoalhaven Professional Business Association, Steven Bayer.

How many judges are there?

Two judges per category

Steps involved

1. Judges meet to eliminate conflicts of interest and sign confidentiality agreements
2. Judges are assigned to categories
3. Judges review and score all entries in their category
4. Judges determine their category finalists
5. Finalists are contacted and announced
6. Interviews are undertaken
7. Judges choose their category winner
8. Judges meet to determine Business of the Year
9. Winners' names are provided to the Shoalhaven Business Chamber for announcement at the Awards gala

What are judges looking for in your written entry?

The judges are initially looking for the questions to be answered. Providing information that is not related to the question is not helpful. Your responses must also clearly demonstrate excellence by your business.

Interviews/site visits

Interviews will take place between Thursday 20 July and Tuesday 8 August, typically at the finalists' place of business. Finalists will be announced on 20 July so this is the earliest that judges will be able to start contacting finalists to set up interviews. Interviews take between 30 and 60 minutes.

Franchise business owners

Please note that if you are a franchise business, the judges will be looking for information that demonstrates extraordinary success in the execution of your franchise model and/or unique initiatives, strategies and other successes that are directly attributable to your local team and that set your business apart from competitors and other local organisations. This approach aims to fairly recognise a franchise's dedication to excellence while acknowledging the advantage a franchise structure offers from an operational and support service perspective.

What are the judges looking for during interview?

The judges will be looking for entrants to clearly reinforce information provided in the entry. They will also ask questions that are not part of the written submission to learn
Finalists are selected based on the score from their written entry.

How are finalists selected?

Finalists are selected based on the score from their written entry.

How winners are selected

Winners are selected by judges scoring the written submission as well as responses provided in the interview.

How Business of the Year is selected

Outstanding business category winners that also meet the additional criteria for Business of the Year will be put forward as a finalist. Each judge presents their case as to why they feel the business they are putting forward deserves to win. Once the shortlist is determined, judges vote by secret ballot.

What are the distinguishing features of the Business of the Year?

In addition to being a standout business when compared with the other category winners, judges will also be looking for:

- Demonstrated growth
- Industry success
- Financial sustainability and solvency
- Strong examples of inclusive initiatives that go beyond basic compliance
- Strong examples of social responsibility
- Businesses that demonstrate contribution to the Shoalhaven business community
- Businesses that cultivate an attitude of contribution to the Shoalhaven business community

How does the audit process work?

The judging process is overseen by an independent team of auditors from the Shoalhaven Professional Business Association.

Receiving feedback on your entry and interview

If you would like feedback to be provided on your entry and your interview, please contact your judge directly.

Awards Finalists' Evening

An Awards Finalists and Sponsors Evening will be held at the Bomaderry Bowling Club on Thursday 10th August.

All finalists and sponsors will be invited. One ticket per finalist organisation will be provided. Extras can be purchased, price TBC.

The purpose of this event is to recognise and congratulate our Awards finalists, providing an opportunity to be recognised and celebrated ahead of the Awards Gala on 25th August.

It is also an opportunity for us to thank our sponsors.

The Shoalhaven Business Chamber thanks the Bomaderry Bowling Club for their generosity in sponsoring this event.

Post Awards eBook

Last year we created a post Awards eBook and it received extremely positive feedback. This year we will once again continue the momentum and excitement that the Awards generate, and as well as celebrate the success of our winners, through the production of an ebook. The ebook will also better connect our sponsors with their respective category winners, and provide better visibility as to the alignment between sponsors and categories.

The eBook will ensure that stories of success are captured, our winners celebrated, and our sponsors and supporters further recognised after the Awards period.

Award winner interviews

After the Awards, each winner will be interviewed to garner content for the ebook. Interviews can be conducted at your place of business, or offsite at the winners' discretion. Interviews will be conducted via email in September.

eBook distribution

The ebook will be distributed to all Awards entrants, all gala attendees, and all Shoalhaven Business Chamber members. It will also be posted on the Chamber website and Facebook page.

CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS & QUESTIONS

Business Leader

Sponsored by



The Business Leader award recognises the positive contribution made to business by business people and professionals. The award recognises those who demonstrate outstanding entrepreneurial spirit, strategic business direction and innovative ideas, whilst providing inspiration to a new generation of upcoming business leaders. Individuals entering into this category can be self employed or employed by a business.

Questions

1. Provide a current profile of yourself including your scope of responsibilities, details of your role, any direct reports, your budget, and financial and organisation reporting line. Word count: Maximum 400

2. Detail your achievements in business in the previous 5 years with clear measurable examples. Word count: Maximum 400

3. Why do you believe you should be considered as a business leader, with examples of how you have used your leadership skills? Word count: Maximum 400

4. Provide an overview of your 5 year goals /milestones and how you are working toward achieving each of them. Word count: Maximum 400

5. Describe the key challenges you have faced as a business leader in the past 5 years and how you overcame each of them. Word count: Maximum 400

6. Demonstrate how you have helped the community (and or the business community) overcome social or environmental problems. Word count: Maximum 400

Additional T&Cs

In addition to the general T&C's the following apply to this category:

- NSW Business Chamber Regional Advisory Councillors are ineligible to enter into this category.
- Local Chamber of Commerce Staff and Executives are ineligible to enter into this category

Young Business Executive

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The Young Business Executive award recognises an inspirational young professional aged between 18-35 years who has built a successful career with an organisation. To enter into this award the individual must have been employed by their current employer for a minimum of 12 months.

Questions
1. What is your employment background? Word count: Max 400

2. Provide a current profile of yourself including current job role and scope of responsibilities including details of the role, any direct reports, your budget, your financial and organisational reporting line. Word count: Max 400

3. Detail your measurable career achievements including key milestones. Word count: Max 400

4. Provide an overview of your 5 year goals/milestones and how you are working towards each of these. Word count: Max 400

5. Describe the key challenges you have faced as a young business professional and how you have dealt with each of these challenges, including examples. Word count: Max 400

6. What do you believe makes you a good leader, including examples of where you have had to use your leadership skills? Word count: Max 400

7. OPTIONAL QUESTION: Demonstrate how you have helped the community (and or the business community) overcome social or environmental problems. Please elaborate, being sure to include:
• specific examples;
• outcomes;
• the scale of resources (financial and in kind) applied; and
• reference to acknowledgements or awards that will assist in the assessment.

Additional T&C's - In addition to the general T&C's the following apply to this category:

- Entrant must be employed by the organisation for a period of 12 months and over at the time of entry submission.
- Should the entrant leave the organisation before the Regional or State Gala event, their entry is ineligible.
- The Finalist complimentary ticket is non transferrable in this category at regional or state level.
- NSW Business Chamber State and Regional Councillors are ineligible to enter into this category.
- Local Chamber of Commerce Staff and Executives are ineligible to enter into this category.

Sponsored by



Young Entrepreneur

The Young Entrepreneur award recognises an inspirational young person aged between 18-35 years who, through their own commitment and passion, has built and operates a successful business. This award recognises young business leaders who demonstrate outstanding entrepreneurial spirit, strategic direction and innovative ideas whilst providing inspiration to a new generation of upcoming young business people.

Questions
1. How did you identify a market need? Word Count: Maximum 400 words

2. What problem have you solved for the market/customer? Word Count: Maximum 200 words

3. Describe your business/solution competitive advantage. Word count: Maximum 400 words

4. Who is your market? Word count: Maximum 200 words

5. Describe how you funded your business. Word count: Maximum 400

6. Provide an overview of your 5 year goals/milestones for your business and how you are working towards these. Word count: Maximum 400

7. Detail the measurable achievements in your business. Word count: Maximum 400

8. Describe the key challenges you have faced as a young entrepreneur and how you deal with these challenges. Word count: Maximum 400

9. Provide examples of how you demonstrate inspiration to other young entrepreneurial people? Word count: Maximum 400

10. OPTIONAL QUESTION: Demonstrate how you have helped the community (and or the business community) overcome social or environmental problems. Please elaborate, being sure to include:
• specific examples;
• outcomes;
• the scale of resources (financial and in kind) applied; and
• reference to acknowledgements or awards that will assist in the assessment. Maximum 400

10. Why do you believe you should win this award? Word count: Maximum 300

In addition to the general T&Cs the following apply to this category:-

- - Entrants must have ownership or part ownership and been operating their business for a minimum of 2 years at the time of entry submission.
- - NSW Business Chamber State and Regional Councillors are ineligible to enter into this category.
- - Local Chamber of Commerce Staff and Executive are ineligible to enter into this category.

Excellence in Small Business

Sponsored by



The Excellence in Small Business award recognises a business, employing less than 20 that has attained significant growth and is able to demonstrate the specific strategies and processes implemented to achieve sustainable growth in the previous 24 months.

(For businesses employing less than 20 employees on payroll in Australia such as contractors, casuals and labour hire staff.)

Questions

1. What is unique about your business and how does it demonstrate excellence? Word Count: Maximum 400

2. Describe your business growth in the previous 24 months. Word count: Maximum 400

3. What were the strategies and plans you initiated to achieve your business growth over the previous 24 months. Word count: Maximum 450

4. Explain how these strategies and their outcomes demonstrate "excellence". Word count: Maximum 400

5. Detail the measurable results you achieved both financial and non-financial and how these demonstrate "excellence". Word count: Maximum 400

6. OPTIONAL QUESTION: How does your business adopt inclusive practices and recognise the needs of a diverse community? Word count: Maximum 400

7. OPTIONAL QUESTION: Demonstrate how you have helped the community (and or the business community) overcome social or environmental problems. Please elaborate, being sure to include:

- specific examples;
- outcomes;
- the scale of resources (financial and in kind) applied; and
- reference to acknowledgements or awards that will assist in the assessment. Word count: Maximum 400

Sponsored by

Excellence in Business

The Excellence in Business award recognises a business that has attained significant growth and is able to demonstrate the specific strategies and processes implemented to achieve sustainable growth over the previous 24 months.

(For businesses employing 20 or more employees on payroll in Australia such as contractors, casuals and labour hire staff)

Questions

1. What is unique about your business and how does it demonstrate excellence? Word Count: Maximum 400

2. Describe your business growth in the previous 24 months. Word count: Maximum 400

3. What were the strategies and plans you initiated to achieve your business growth over the previous 24 months. Word count: Maximum 450

4. Explain how these strategies and their outcomes demonstrate "excellence". Word count: Maximum 400

5. Detail the measurable results you achieved both financial and non-financial and how these demonstrate "excellence". Word count: Maximum 400

6. OPTIONAL QUESTION: How does your business adopt inclusive practices and recognise the needs of a diverse community? Word count: Maximum 400

7. OPTIONAL QUESTION: Demonstrate how you have helped the community (and or the business community) overcome social or environmental problems. Please elaborate, being sure to include:
- specific examples;
- outcomes;
- the scale of resources (financial and in kind) applied; and
- reference to acknowledgements or awards that will assist in the assessment. Word count: Maximum 400

Start Up Superstar

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Hotondo Homes
AUSTRALIA'S LEADING NETWORK OF PROFESSIONAL BUILDERS
A great find

This category recognises a business that has been operating for less than 2 years that delivers a product/service/idea/invention with credible potential. This award recognises early-stage startups that have a solid chance of market success, and strongly displays the entrepreneurial spirit.

Questions
Is this your first startup? (If no please specify other business ventures and their degree of success). Word Count: Maximum 300

1. How did you come up with this business idea? Word count: Maximum 200

2. What problem (or need) is your business solving? Word count: Maximum 200 words

3. What kinds of people, groups, or organisations have that problem? How many are there, where are they, what do they do about it now? Word count: Maximum 400

4. What is unique about your business and how does it demonstrate excellence? Who will you compete with? How are they different? Word count: Maximum 400

5. Describe how you funded your business. Word count: Maximum 200

6. What is the product/service that you sell in your business? Word count: Maximum 200

7. Detail how your business has the potential to scale and achieve financial sustainability. Word Count: Maximum 400

8. Detail and include your current research, customer marketing strategy, logistics and service delivery. Word Count: Maximum 400

9. Provide commercial and technical evidence your team has the ability and competencies to achieve success and detail strategy and time frame involved. Word Count: Maximum 400

10. What is the most significant result or achievement for both you and the business, in terms of results to date? (Sales, customers, revenue, deals, growth). Word Count: Maximum 300

Sponsored by



Excellence in Innovation

Recognises businesses that have made significant contributions to their industry through the introduction or improvement of an idea, method, technology, process or application.

Questions
1. Provide details of the innovation or innovative approach in your business. Word count: Maximum 400

2. Explain how your business monitors and reacts to changes in the market including how your business acquires an understanding of emerging customer needs and market developments. Word count: Maximum 400

3. Provide examples of how your business has been innovative over the previous 24 months including cost effectiveness, integration and risk minimisation. Word count: Maximum 400

4. How well has the innovation been received by the marketplace? Provide details of the commercialisation, adoption or take up of the innovation and its sustainability over time. Word count: Maximum 400

5. How has innovative activity in your business in the previous 12 - 24 months helped grow or improve your business such as increased size, greater scope, productivity improvements, higher revenue, lower cost? Word count: Maximum 400

6. Demonstrate how the innovation has or is likely to have a positive impact beyond your business (i.e. to your industry, to the community). Word count: Maximum 400

7. Did the innovation achieve its objectives and goals? How are these improvements or impacts to the business measured? Word Count: Maximum 400

8. OPTIONAL QUESTION: How does your business adopt inclusive practices and recognise the needs of a diverse community? Word count: Maximum 400

9. OPTIONAL QUESTION: Demonstrate how you have helped the community (and or the business community) overcome social or environmental problems. Please elaborate, being sure to include:
• specific examples;
• outcomes;
• the scale of resources (financial and in kind) applied; and
• reference to acknowledgements or awards that will assist in the assessment. Word count: Maximum 400

Excellence in Sustainability

Sponsored by



The Excellence in Sustainability award recognises businesses that are working to reduce the impact of their operations on the environment and/or provide products and services that have positive environmental outcomes.

(Where sustainability is your core business, you must enter this category based on sustainable initiatives and projects within your business, not related to your core offering.)

Questions

1. Describe your business environmental sustainability goals. Note that these must be quantifiable targets. Word count: Maximum 300

2. Describe the initiatives/actions your organisation has undertaken to achieve its sustainability objectives in the previous 12- 24 months. Word Count: Maximum 400

3. Describe your sustainability achievements over the last 12 months. Word count: Maximum 400

4. Describe how you involve staff in your environmental initiatives. Word count: Maximum 400

5. Provide measurable evidence of how the sustainability objectives your business has achieved have contributed to the business, customers, staff and suppliers such as financial outcomes, staff engagement, marketing benefits, supplier/customer loyalty. Word count: 400

6. OPTIONAL QUESTION: How does your business adopt inclusive practices and recognise the needs of a diverse community? Word count: Maximum 400

7. OPTIONAL QUESTION: Demonstrate how you have helped the community (and or the business community) overcome social or environmental problems. Please elaborate, being sure to include:

- specific examples;
- outcomes;
- the scale of resources (financial and in kind) applied; and
- reference to acknowledgements or awards that will assist in the assessment. Word count: Maximum 400

Employer of Choice

Sponsored by



The Employer of Choice award recognises organisations that put in place strategies and initiatives to create stimulating and supportive workplace environments for their employees. These strategies or initiatives must have a positive impact on both employees and the organisation as a whole.

Questions

1. Explain any specific HR and WHS programs and policies you have undertaken in the previous 24 months. Word count: Maximum 400

2. Why did your business embark on this project/s and/or initiatives? Word count: Maximum 400

3. What measurable results have been achieved and how have they positively contributed to workplace productivity and employee satisfaction? (i.e. reduction in voluntary staff turnover, absenteeism, training and development hours, employee satisfaction measures). Word count: Maximum 400

4. Identify and describe the benefits you offer as an Employer of Choice? Word Count Maximum 400

5. OPTIONAL QUESTION: How does your business adopt inclusive practices and recognise the needs of a diverse community? Word count: Maximum 400

6. OPTIONAL QUESTION: Demonstrate how you have helped the community (and or the business community) overcome social or environmental problems. Please elaborate, being sure to include:

- specific examples;
- outcomes;
- the scale of resources (financial and in kind) applied; and
- reference to acknowledgements or awards that will assist in the assessment. Word count: Maximum 400

Excellence in Community Service

Sponsored by

EVERYDAY CareSouth

This award recognises not-for-profit organisations that are positively contributing to the Shoalhaven community through projects, services and/or through other long term initiatives.

Questions

1. How do you engage with the community to encourage their support and partnership? Word Count Maximum 400

2. What are the key challenges of operating a Community Service organisation in the Shoalhaven? Word Count Maximum 400

3. How does your organisation ensure financial sustainability? Word Count Maximum 400

4. Detail the measurable results you achieved, both financial and non-financial, and how these demonstrate "excellence". Word Count Maximum 400

5. OPTIONAL QUESTION: How does your business adopt inclusive practices and recognise the needs of a diverse community? Word count: Maximum 400

6. OPTIONAL QUESTION: Demonstrate how you have helped the community (and or the business community) overcome social or environmental problems. Please elaborate, being sure to include:

- specific examples;
- outcomes;
- the scale of resources (financial and in kind) applied; and
- reference to acknowledgements or awards that will assist in the assessment. Word count: Maximum 400

Excellence in Professional & Commercial

Sponsored by



This category is open to providers of specialist services such as medical, legal, consultants, business and personal development, business to business, accredited training, architects, draughts people, interior designers, surveyors and marketing/advertising agencies.

Questions

1. Explain your business growth and achievements in the past 12-24 months. Word Count Maximum 400

2. What were the strategies and plans to achieve your business growth over the past 12-24 months? Word Count Maximum 450

3. How did you implement these strategies? Word Count Maximum 400

4. Detail the measurable results you achieved, both financial and non-financial, and how these demonstrate "excellence". Word Count Maximum 400

5. How do ensure you are up to date with relevant industry and regulatory changes in your industry? Word Count Maximum 400

6. OPTIONAL QUESTION: How does your business adopt inclusive practices and recognise the needs of a diverse community? Word count: Maximum 400

7. OPTIONAL QUESTION: Demonstrate how you have helped the community (and or the business community) overcome social or environmental problems. Please elaborate, being sure to include:

- specific examples;
- outcomes;
- the scale of resources (financial and in kind) applied; and
- reference to acknowledgements or awards that will assist in the assessment. Word count: Maximum 400

Outstanding Home Based Business

Sponsored by



This award acknowledges the high growth in home-based businesses and their importance to our business economy. A home based business is defined as a business with no other fixed address other than the business owner's home, although business activity may or may not occur at that location and employs the equivalent of 5 or less FTE (excludes any contractors or subcontractors).

Questions

1. Explain your business growth and achievements in the past 12-24 months. Word count: Maximum 400

2. What are the key challenges of operating a business from home and how have you overcome them? Word count: Maximum 400

3. What are the benefits of operating your business from home and how do you use these to your advantage? Word count: Maximum 400

4. What is your point of difference and how do you differentiate yourself from your competitors?

5. Detail the measurable results you achieved, both financial and non-financial, and how these demonstrate "excellence". Word count: Maximum 400

6. OPTIONAL QUESTION: How does your business adopt inclusive practices and recognise the needs of a diverse community? Word count: Maximum 400

7. OPTIONAL QUESTION: Demonstrate how you have helped the community (and or the business community) overcome social or environmental problems. Please elaborate, being sure to include:

- specific examples;
- outcomes;
- the scale of resources (financial and in kind) applied; and
- reference to acknowledgements or awards that will assist in the assessment. Word count: Maximum 400

Excellence in Tourism & Hospitality

Sponsored by

integrity real estate

This category is open to providers of tourism, entertainment, commercial tourist accommodation and hospitality services. Businesses eligible to enter include providers or general tourism/recreational facilities and attractions, licenced clubs, hotels, motels, caravan and camping parks, B&B operators, conference and catering operators, restaurants and cafes.

Questions

1. Explain your business growth and achievements in the past 12-24 months. Word count: Maximum 400

2. What were the strategies and plans to achieve your business growth over the past 12-24 months? Word count: Maximum 450

3. How did you implement these strategies? Word count: Maximum 400

4. Detail the measurable results you have achieved, both financial and non-financial, and how these demonstrate "excellence". Word count: Maximum 400

5. Explain how you participate in and contribute to the growth and success of hospitality and tourism in the Shoalhaven region? Word count: Maximum 400

6. OPTIONAL QUESTION: How does your business adopt inclusive practices and recognise the needs of a diverse community? Word count: Maximum 400

7. OPTIONAL QUESTION: Demonstrate how you have helped the community (and or the business community) overcome social or environmental problems. Please elaborate, being sure to include:
- specific examples;
- outcomes;
- the scale of resources (financial and in kind) applied; and
- reference to acknowledgements or awards that will assist in the assessment. Word count: Maximum 400

Excellence in Retail & Personal Services

Sponsored by

clifton accountants

This category applies to all retail businesses ranging from smaller sole trader operations to large department stores, motor vehicle operations and sales, and a wide range of health, fitness, beauty and personal services, including allied health providers.

Questions

1. Explain your business growth and achievements in the past 12-24 months. Word count: Maximum 400

2. What were the strategies and plans to achieve your business growth over the past 12-24 months? Word count: Maximum 450

3. How did you implement these strategies? Word count: Maximum 400

4. Detail the measurable results you achieved, both financial and non-financial, and how these demonstrate "excellence". Word count: Maximum 400

5. What is your point of difference in your service philosophy and how do you differentiate yourself from your competitors? Word count: Maximum 400

6. OPTIONAL QUESTION: 6. How does your business adopt inclusive practices and recognise the needs of a diverse community? Word count: Maximum 400

7. OPTIONAL QUESTION: Demonstrate how you have helped the community (and or the business community) overcome social or environmental problems. Please elaborate, being sure to include:

- specific examples;
- outcomes;
- the scale of resources (financial and in kind) applied; and
- reference to acknowledgements or awards that will assist in the assessment. Word count: Maximum 400

Excellence in Production

Sponsored by



This category is open to all businesses engaged in the production or manufacturing of any product or good intended for market supply, ranging from the construction and building industry to primary production and manufacturing. Types of businesses include those engaged in building works, civil engineering, food production, farming, supply of raw materials, manufacturing of finished goods, as well as mining operations.

Questions

1. Explain your business growth and achievements in the past 12-24 months. Word count: Maximum 400

2. What were the strategies and plans you initiated to achieve your business growth over the past 12-24 months? Word count: Maximum 450

3. How did you implement these strategies? Word count: Maximum 400

4. Detail the measurable results you achieved, both financial and non-financial, and how these demonstrate "excellence". Word count: Maximum 400

5. Explain any specific HR and WHS programs and policies you have undertaken to ensure the engagement, wellbeing and safety of your employees and contractors. Word count: Maximum 400

6. OPTIONAL QUESTION: 6. How does your business adopt inclusive practices and recognise the needs of a diverse community? Word count: Maximum 400

7. OPTIONAL QUESTION: Demonstrate how you have helped the community (and or the business community) overcome social or environmental problems. Please elaborate, being sure to include:

- specific examples;
- outcomes;
- the scale of resources (financial and in kind) applied; and
- reference to acknowledgements or awards that will assist in the assessment. Word count: Maximum 400

Employee of the Year

Sponsored by

QUEST NOWRA

This category is employer nominated, meaning an employee cannot directly enter. It is open to all businesses, both for profit not-for-profit, with at least one employee who is not a director or owner of the business. The Employee of the Year award seeks to recognise outstanding employees who go above and beyond in their role and who actively seek out opportunities to contribute to the overall success of your business. The employee must be directly employed by your organisation, and must have been in your employ for a minimum of 12 months as at 17 May 2017. By completing the application for this category, you certify that you have your employee's approval to enter them in this award.

Questions

1. Provide a current profile of your employee including current job role and scope of responsibilities, any direct reports, and their organisational reporting line. Word count: Maximum 250

2. Detail your employee's achievements over the last 12-24 months. Word count: Maximum 350

3. Explain how your employee's contribution has delivered measurable business results in the last 12-24 months. Word count: Maximum 350

4. Describe how your employee has changed or enhanced your workplace culture, including any examples where they have inspired co-workers. Word count: Maximum 350

5. Describe any challenges your employee has faced in their role over the last 12-24 months, and detail how they have dealt with and overcome these challenges, including examples. Word count: Maximum 350

6. What do you believe this employee should be named as Employee of the Year? Include any other relevant examples of how this employee goes above and beyond in their role, including how they represent your business in the community. Word count: Maximum 350

Excellence in Inclusion

Sponsored by



This category recognises individuals or businesses that address the needs of a diverse community and workforce. An inclusive society facilitates the needs of all its members, and encourages participation by all in everyday activities, regardless of ability, age, gender, race, lifestyle, religious belief or any other element of diversity that makes individuals unique.

What is inclusion?
Inclusion embraces and recognises the perspectives, needs and contributions of all individuals. In the process of becoming more inclusive, organisations increase awareness and sensitivity to the unique gifts brought by each individual, whether they are a customer, employee, supplier, or any other touchpoint into the organisation. An inclusive nature is cultivated through curiosity, sensitivity and expanding awareness beyond one's self.

There are multiple elements of inclusion that go beyond regulatory compliance to create a functional and welcoming environment: These elements include:

1. Physical. How your place of business or workplace is set up, including but not limited to the space, technology, furniture, access, and methods of communication used
2. Policy. Does your organisation have clear policies that support the needs of a diverse community and workforce?
3. Social and cultural. Do your employees, suppliers, customers and their family and friends feel welcome and included? Do your staff understand the needs of a diverse community?

To be eligible for this award, you must enter a business award category, and answer the below stated question (this is listed in each relevant category):

"How does your business adopt inclusive practices and recognise the needs of a diverse community?"

Please note that you cannot directly enter this award. Judges will select finalists from the responses to this question as it appears in each of the following business categories:

- Excellence in Business
- Employer of Choice
- Excellence in Innovation
- Excellence in Small Business
- Excellence in Sustainability
- Excellence in Production
- Excellence in Professional & Commercial
- Excellence in Retail & Personal Services
- Outstanding Home Based Business
- Excellence in Community Service (not-for-profit)
- Excellence in Tourism & Hospitality

If the judges for the Excellence in Inclusion category select you as a finalist, you will be required to have an interview specific to the Excellence in Inclusion award.

Sponsored by

Excellence in Social Responsibility

This category recognises individuals, businesses or organisations that demonstrate a commitment to going beyond their core business activities to create a better place for others either through benevolent activities or involvement in bettering the wider community.

To be eligible for this award, you must enter a business award category, and answer the below stated question (this is the last question in each other category).

"Demonstrate how you have helped the community (and or the business community) overcome social or environmental problems. Please elaborate, being sure to include:

1. specific examples;
2. outcomes;
3. the scale of resources (financial and in kind) applied; and
4. reference to acknowledgements or awards that will assist in the assessment process."

Please note that you cannot directly enter this award. Judges will select finalists from the responses to this question as it appears in each of below categories:

- Young Business Executive
- Young Entrepreneur
- Excellence in Business
- Employer of Choice
- Excellence in Innovation
- Excellence in Small Business
- Excellence in Sustainability
- Start Up Superstar
- Excellence in Production
- Excellence in Professional & Commercial
- Excellence in Retail & Personal Services
- Outstanding Home Based Business
- Excellence in Community Service (not-for-profit)
- Excellence in Tourism & Hospitality

If the judges for this category select you as a finalist, you will be required to have an interview specific to the Excellence in Social Responsibility award.

Terms & conditions

It is important that you read the complete terms and conditions before submitting your entry. These terms are also available on the SBC website at www.shoalhavenbusinesschamber.com.au/awards/termsandconditions

1. How to enter

1.1. To enter the Shoalhaven Business Awards all applicants must read and understand the terms and conditions and complete the entry form for your chosen category/categories. 1.2. By lodging your submission, you agree to be bound by the Terms and Conditions of entry. 1.3. Entry into the Shoalhaven Business Awards is via the Awards entry portal, located at 1.4. Your entry must be submitted by 5.00pm AEST, 27 June, 2017. 1.5. Shoalhaven Business Chamber reserves the right to extend or vary the entry period if required, before or after the award entry period commences.

2. Eligibility to enter

2.1. All businesses must have been in operation for at least two years as at the opening date for entries, 17 May, 2017 (excludes 'Start Up Superstar' category). 2.2 Eligible businesses include Australian registered businesses, companies or organisations. This includes partnerships, franchises, community organisations, registered charities, commonwealth & state government departments, agencies and local government bodies. 2.3 Businesses must have commenced or have a significant local presence in the Shoalhaven as defined by the Local Government Area. 2.4 Members of the Judging Panel (or their businesses) are not eligible to enter the 2017 Shoalhaven Business Awards. 2.5 Winners from aligned categories in the 2016 Illawarra Business Awards program cannot enter the same category in the subsequent year (2017) that they won. For example, if you won Excellence in Small Business at the 2016 Shoalhaven Awards, and went on to Illawarra, but did not win, you may enter Excellence in Small Business in 2017 in the Shoalhaven. 2.6. Winners from the 2016 Illawarra Awards are free to enter any other category in 2017, other than the category they won in 2016. 2.7 You don't need to be a Shoalhaven Business Chamber member to enter.

3. Conditions of entry

3.1. Entrants must be willing to participate in Awards related publicity organised by the Shoalhaven Business Chamber and agree to be contacted by all media sponsors before and after entry to the Awards and the event. 3.2. Entrants can only win a specific category three times. The winning business/organisation will enter the chamber's 'Hall of Fame' and be listed on the honour board in the chamber office. 3.3. By entering, you agree to be interviewed by the Shoalhaven Business Chamber, in the event that you win an Award. Every Award winner will be interviewed to garner content for a 2017 Shoalhaven Business Awards ebook. 3.4 By entering the Awards, and by answering the 'Inclusion' question in each category, you understand you are also entering the Excellence in Inclusion Award. This excludes the Business Leader, Young Business Executive, Young Entrepreneur and Start Up Superstar categories. 3.5 By entering the Awards, and by answering the 'Social Responsibility' question in each category, you understand you are also entering the Excellence in Social Responsibility Award. This excludes the Business Leader and Start Up Superstar categories. 3.6 The Inclusion and Social Responsibility questions are optional.

4. Confidentiality

4.1. All information provided in the entry form will be used for the purpose of judging only and will be treated as commercial-in-confidence by Shoalhaven Business Chamber. 4.2. If you are selected as a finalist, the information provided in the entry will be used for the purpose of promoting the Awards and your business.

5. Judging Panel

5.1. Applications will be assessed by independent expert Judging Panels made up of senior industry figures and members of the professions, together with a range of other key distinguished stakeholders. 5.2. There will be a separate Judging Panel comprising 2 judges for each Award Category. 5.3. The entire judging process will be overseen by independent auditors. 5.4. The Judging Panels will conduct interviews with all Finalists (to be selected by the Judges) and may undertake site visits to some entrants (if appropriate). Should your business be selected as a finalist, the interview will take place at an independent venue or on site at the discretion of the Judges. 5.5. The Judging Panels reserve the right not to issue an Award in a given category. 5.6. Both the written application and the interview will be scored and form part of the final decision. 5.7. The judges' decision is final and no further correspondence will be entered into.

6. Awards

6.1. The Awards comprise of the following categories:

- Business Leader
- Young Business Executive
- Young Entrepreneur
- Excellence in Small Business (less than 20 FTE)
- Excellence in Business (20 or more FTE)
- Start Up Superstar
- Excellence in Innovation
- Excellence in Sustainability
- Employer of Choice
- Excellence in Community Service (not for profit)*
- Excellence in Professional & Commercial*
- Outstanding Home Based Business*
- Excellence in Tourism & Hospitality*
- Excellence in Retail & Personal Services*
- Excellence in Production*
- Employee of the Year* #
- Excellence in Inclusion *^
- Excellence in Social Responsibility*^
- Business of The Year*^

6.1.1 *Shoalhaven specific Awards, do not progress to Illawarra and NSW Business Chamber Business Awards. 6.1.2^ Award categories that cannot be directly entered. The finalists for these awards will be selected by the judges. 6.1.3 # This category is employer nominated and is open to all organisations, both profit and not-for-profit and who have at least one employee who is not a director, owner or part owner of the organisation. Employers may nominate up to three of their employees in this category. Employees must be a direct employee of the employer's organisation and must have been employed for 12 months or more as at 17 May, 2017. 6.2. Aligned category winners will automatically enter the Illawarra Business Chamber Awards as a Regional Category Finalist. 6.3 If you wish to go on to be a Regional Finalist at the Illawarra Business Chamber Business Awards, you will be required to be become a NSW Business Chamber Member as per the terms and conditions set by the Illawarra Business Chamber. 6.4 The maximum number of business categories you can enter is three. Business categories include Excellence in Small Business, Excellence in Business, Start Up Superstar, Excellence in Innovation, Excellence in Sustainability, Employer of Choice, Excellence in Community Service (not for profit), Excellence in Professional & Commercial, Outstanding Home Based Business, Excellence in Tourism & Hospitality, Excellence in Retail & Personal Services, Excellence in Production. 6.5 An organisation may enter more than one individual category, however any one individual may only enter one individual category. Individual categories are Business Leader, Young Entrepreneur, Young Business Executive and Employee of the Year. 6.6 To be eligible for Business of the Year, a business must win an aligned category.

7. Announcing the finalists and winners

7.1. Finalists will be notified by email, and published on the Shoalhaven Business Chamber website 7.2. Winners will not be notified prior to the Awards Gala Dinner to be held on Friday, 25th August 7.3. Winners will be announced at the Awards Gala Dinner.

8. Disclaimer

8.1. The Shoalhaven Business Chamber accepts no liability regarding loss of patent or commercial returns arising from participation in the 2017 Shoalhaven Business Awards application process. 8.2. Applicants are strongly advised to secure adequate protection for their intellectual property rights.

FAQs

PORTAL
What is the portal address?
http://www.businessannualawards.com.au/login.aspx?chamber=shoalhaven

How do I log into the portal?
You must create a new username and password. The portal has undergone a number of changes this year, and as a result, every user MUST create a new profile, regardless of whether you have entered before.

KEY DATES
What date do the Awards open?
Wednesday 15 May, 10.30am

What date do the Awards close?
Thursday 27 June, 5.00pm

When do I need to be available for interviews?
Interviews are conducted between Thursday 20 July and Tuesday 8 August.

ENTERING & T&Cs
Do I need to be a Shoalhaven Business Chamber member to enter the Awards?
No you don't, the Awards are open to all businesses in the Shoalhaven (definition of 'business in the Shoalhaven' outlined in terms and conditions 2.3).

Can I enter a category that I won last year?
Yes. However, if you went on to the Illawarra Awards, and you also won your category there, then you cannot enter the same category again. For example, if you won Excellence in Business at the Shoalhaven Awards in 2016, and you then went on to win Excellence in Business at the Illawarra Awards (in 2016), you cannot enter it again until 2018. If you were a finalist in the Illawarra Awards, but did not win, you may enter the same category again this year.

Why can't I enter a category that I won at the Illawarra Awards in consecutive years?
This is a condition set by NSW Business Chamber. As the Shoalhaven aligns with the NSW Business Chamber, we must abide by their terms and conditions.

Are there any restrictions on categories I won prior to 2016?
No, unless you have been admitted to the Hall of Fame for winning (that same category) three times. Then, you can no longer enter that category.

Can I get someone else to complete my entry?
Yes, in fact there are business owners who already do this, and it is quite common across many award programs. If writing is not your strong suit, consider delegating it to someone else. Many businesses do this to eliminate time being a barrier to entry. It's important that you work with the person writing the entry to ensure it's in line with your expectations, and to ensure you are clear on what is in your entry, should you make it to interview.

Isn't that 'cheating'/giving an unfair advantage?
Excellent business leaders are not necessarily skilled at crafting compelling business writing. And you may have an incredible story, but not know the best way to tell it. It is completely feasible to run an exceptional business, but have poor spelling, poor grammar, poor sentence structure, or not know how to effectively and convincingly use the English language to your advantage. If this sounds like you, by outsourcing the writing element of your submission, you are giving yourself the best possible chance of creating a winning entry. Organisations such as Proof Communications, a Sydney-based business-to-business writing consultancy, specialise in writing business award entries. They can not only write, edit and proof your entry, they can help you uncover valuable information that will ensure you stand out from the crowd.
Do I need to answer the 'Inclusion' and 'Social Responsibility questions in each category in order to enter that category?
No, you do not. These questions still contribute towards your entry in your chosen category, but they will also provide you with an entry into their respective Awards. Think of it as two bites of the cherry; one Award entry actually gives you the chance to be a finalist in two awards!

Will I be interviewed if I am selected as a finalist for Excellence in Inclusion or Excellence in Social Responsibility?
Yes you will. If the judges from the Inclusion and Social Responsibility Awards select your response to be a finalist, they will need to interview you specifically to understand more about your business and how it relates to Inclusion and/or Social Responsibility.

Can't I just enter the Excellence in Inclusion or Social Responsibility categories?
The only way to enter and be a finalist in these categories is to enter another category. Why is this? We feel that these are important considerations for all businesses. We want to generate awareness about the need for inclusiveness and social responsibility in all business operations.

Does my written entry count towards my final assessment?
Yes it does. The final selection of a category winner is a combination of your written application and your interview.

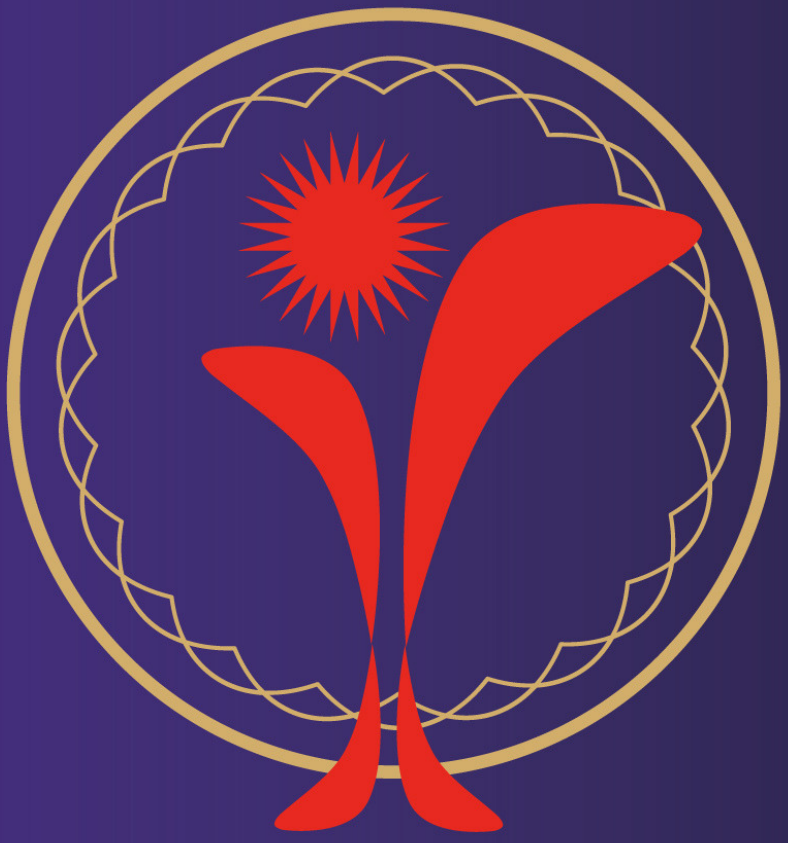
Can I enter the Awards if I am sponsoring?
Yes you may. You cannot enter the category that you are sponsoring, but you may enter any other category.

Can I enter the Awards if I am judging?
No, you cannot enter if you are also judging. This is because each judge plays a role in selecting Business of the Year, which would create a conflict of interest.

Will the sponsor of my category see my entry?
No, the sponsors provide funds to make the Awards possible, but there is no relationship between sponsor of a category and the judge of that category. The only exclusion to this is the Excellence in Inclusion category, which is sponsored by Hansa Sailing and where one of the judges will be Jackie Kay (from Hansa Sailing).

We look forward to receiving your Award entry,
and thank you for participating in the
2017 Shoalhaven Business Awards.

GOOD LUCK



www.shoalhavenbusinesschamber.com.au/awards