



2025

**SHOALHAVEN**

BUSINESS AWARDS

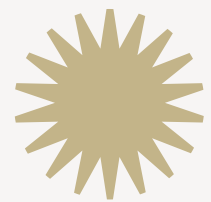
*Awards  
Entry*

**INFORMATION PACK**

**FRIDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2025**

SHOALHAVEN ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

[WWW.SHOALHAVENBUSINESSCHAMBER.COM.AU/AWARDS](http://WWW.SHOALHAVENBUSINESSCHAMBER.COM.AU/AWARDS)



# *Congrats* **ON DECIDING TO ENTER THE AWARDS**

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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.

You are giving yourself the opportunity to represent the Shoalhaven in the Business Illawarra Awards, and as we have seen in the past, event the State Awards.

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

# ABOUT THE AWARDS

THE SHOALHAVEN BUSINESS AWARDS  
ARE THE REGION'S MOST ANTICIPATED  
ANNUAL BUSINESS EVENT.

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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 unrivaled networking opportunities, the chance to share remarkable stories, and ongoing brand exposure to the entire region.

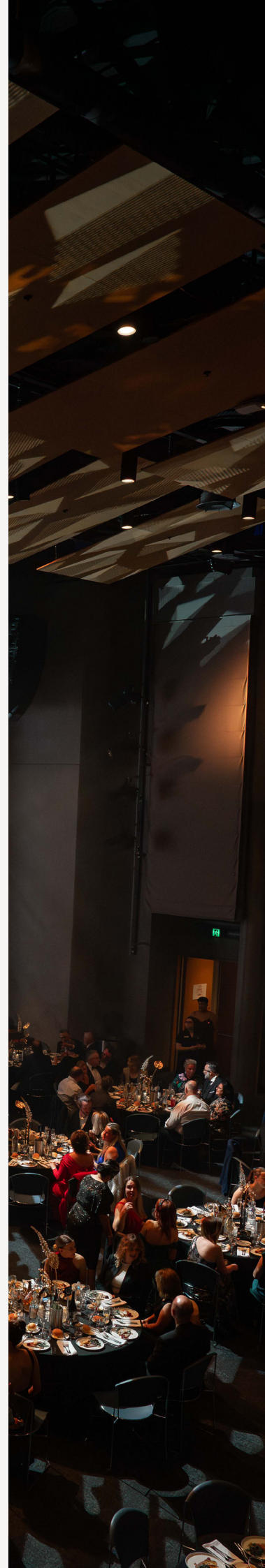
For entrants, the Awards provide a platform for reviewing business operations with fresh eyes, as well as the eyes and minds of experts. They put a spotlight on the region, showcasing the success stories of our most outstanding businesses, and market the Shoalhaven as an investment destination.

All categories are aligned with the Business 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.

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

For sponsorship enquiries and information about entering the Awards contact Alison Henry, Awards Manager  
[awards@shoalhavenbusiness.com.au](mailto:awards@shoalhavenbusiness.com.au) or 0419 985 372.

Read more at [www.shoalhavenbusinesschamber.com.au/awards](http://www.shoalhavenbusinesschamber.com.au/awards)





# KEY DATES

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AWARD LAUNCH	WEDNESDAY 26 <sup>TH</sup> MARCH
ENTRIES CLOSE	MONDAY 5 <sup>TH</sup> MAY
FINALISTS ANNOUNCED	THURSDAY 12 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE
TICKET SALES OPEN	FRIDAY 13 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE
INTERVIEWS COMMENCE	MONDAY 16 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE
INTERVIEWS CONCLUDE	FRIDAY 11 <sup>TH</sup> JULY
TICKETS SALES CLOSE	FRIDAY 18 <sup>TH</sup> JULY
<b>THE SHOALHAVEN BUSINESS AWARDS</b>	<b>FRIDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST</b>

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## CONTACTS

*For questions about entering or portal or password assistance, please contact:*

**Alison Henry, Awards Manager**

awards@shoalhavenbusiness.com.au 0419 985 372.

# CATEGORIES

THE WINNERS OF THESE CATEGORIES WILL GO ON TO REPRESENT THE SHOALHAVEN AND COMPETE IN THE ILLAWARRA BUSINESS AWARDS.

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[OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE](#)

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[OUTSTANDING YOUNG BUSINESS LEADER](#)

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[OUTSTANDING BUSINESS LEADER](#)

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[EMPLOYER OF CHOICE](#)

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[EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION](#)

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[EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY](#)

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[OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY ORGANISATION](#)

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[OUTSTANDING VISITOR EXPERIENCE](#)

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[OUTSTANDING NEW BUSINESS](#)

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[EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION](#)

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[EXCELLENCE IN MICRO BUSINESS](#)

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[EXCELLENCE IN SMALL BUSINESS](#)

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[EXCELLENCE IN LARGE BUSINESS](#)

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**[BUSINESS OF THE YEAR](#)**

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# HOW TO ENTER

ENTRIES ARE COMPLETED ONLINE USING THE BUSINESS NSW [AWARDS ENTRY PORTAL \(AWARDS FORCE\)](#).

## USING THE PORTAL

The login screen will say 'Please login with your NSWBC membership login details'. **If you are not a NSWBC member please Register for your free account.** If you entered the Awards last year, you will need to use the same login details

1. Register an account (*you may use the login details from last year*)
2. Start your entry (*save it in-progress*)
3. Choose your Category
4. Entry name if either individual name for an individual entry or company name for a company entry
5. Submit your entry to be judged.

*If you forget your password simply select the Forgot Password option which is located on the log in page of the awards portal.*

# BENEFITS OF ENTERING

ENTERING AWARDS CAN ELEVATE YOUR BRAND'S REPUTATION, INCREASE VISIBILITY, BUILD RECOGNITION, DRIVING BUSINESS GROWTH.

## 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 AND 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 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 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.



# THE 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.

## HOW MANY JUDGES ARE THERE?

Two judges per category.

## STEPS INVOLVED

- Judges meet to eliminate conflicts of interest and sign confidentiality agreements
- Judges are assigned to categories
- Judges review and score all entries in their category online
- Judges input their interview scores and category finalists are determined
- Finalists are contacted and announced
- Interviews are undertaken
- Judges input their interview scores and winners are determined
- Judges meet to determine Business of the Year
- 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

Interviews will take place between 16 June – 18 July. Judges may travel to your business or take place on zoom or in a neutral location. Finalists will be announced on 12 June so this is the earliest that judges will be able to start contacting finalists to set up interviews. Interview stake 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 interview with the finalists is a crucial part of the judging process. This is the judges' opportunity to get to know the candidates beyond just the written application and to assess their character, leadership abilities, and commitment to the cause. Judges will be evaluating the finalists' ability to effectively communicate their ideas, think critically, and respond thoughtfully

to questions. Most importantly, the judges are seeking out finalists who have demonstrated a track record of making a difference and who they believe have the potential to achieve even greater

things. The interview is the finalists' chance to bring their application to life and to convince the judges that they are the strongest candidate deserving of this prestigious honor.

#### HOW ARE FINALISTS SELECTED?

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

#### 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?

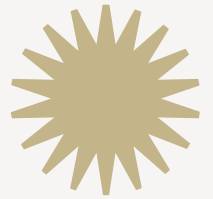
In addition to being a standout business when compared with the other category winners, judges will also be looking for:

- 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?

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





# FINALISTS ANNOUNCED LIVE

THURSDAY 12TH JUNE!

*Celebrating excellence in real time*

Join us for this electric evening dedicated to recognising business excellence across our region. We'll not only reveal and celebrate our remarkable finalists but also honor every Shoalhaven business that took the bold step to showcase their achievements through their entries.

This spectacular event provides the perfect stage to introduce our valued sponsors and express our heartfelt gratitude to the vibrant Shoalhaven business community that continues to drive our region forward.

Don't miss this unforgettable celebration of local business brilliance!

# *Category*

DESCRIPTIONS & QUESTIONS

# OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE

THE OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE AWARD RECOGNISES AN INSPIRATIONAL EMPLOYEE WHO HAS DEMONSTRATED A PASSION FOR THEIR ROLE AND A COMMITMENT TO THEIR WORKPLACE AND THE COMMUNITY. IT IS OPEN TO BUSINESSES TO NOMINATE AN EMPLOYEE.

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## ENTRY CRITERIA

Employers are required to highlight their employees' commitment over the past 12 months to their workplace, the community and to being an outstanding employee. To be eligible to enter this category, the employee must have been employed by their current employer for a minimum of 18 months, at the time of entry.

## ADDITIONAL T&C'S

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

- Should the entrant leave the organisation before the Regional or State Gala event, they will not be eligible to receive an award.

## AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK LIST

- ☑ The employee has been employed by their current employer for at least 18 months at the time of entry.
- ☑ The employee is not a Regional President, State Councillor or Board Member of NSW Business Chamber Limited.
- ☑ I or the employee have not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- ☑ I or the employee am not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.

## QUESTIONS

Entrants' full name:

Current job title:

Name of the organisation or business you work for:

Commencement of employment date:

1. Provide a brief profile, including their current role and scope of responsibilities.

*Maximum word count: 200*

2. Outline their measurable achievements and key milestones while with the business

*Maximum word count: 300*

3. Outline how the employee demonstrates integrity and professionalism in the workplace.

*Maximum word count: 300*

4. Detail the specific activities and initiatives they have undertaken that have demonstrated a passion for their role and a commitment to the workplace and/or the community.

*Maximum word count: 400*

5. Outline the reasons why they are an outstanding employee.

*Maximum word count: 400*

# OUTSTANDING YOUNG BUSINESS LEADER

THE OUTSTANDING YOUNG BUSINESS LEADER AWARD RECOGNISES AN INSPIRATIONAL BUSINESS LEADER AGED 35 OR UNDER AT THE TIME OF ENTRY WHO HAS DEMONSTRATED A COMMITMENT TO THEIR WORKPLACE, INDUSTRY, AND THE COMMUNITY THROUGH LEADERSHIP.

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## ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants are required to demonstrate their commitment over the past 12 months to creating a smarter and more inclusive future and to being an outstanding business leader. To be eligible to enter this category, the individual must have held a management position within their organisation for a minimum of 18 months at the time of entry.

## AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK LIST

- I am aged 35 years or under at the time of entry.
- I am not an employee, Regional President, State Councillor or Board Member of NSW Business Chamber Limited.
- I have not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- I am not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.

## QUESTIONS

Entrants' full name:

Current job title:

Date of birth:

Name of your organisation or business:

1. Provide a brief profile, including your current role and scope of responsibilities.

*Maximum word count: 200*

2. Detail the specific activities and initiatives you have undertaken to reshape your workplace, industry, or community to create a smarter and more inclusive future, with examples of how you have used your leadership skills.

*Maximum word count: 400*

3. Describe the key challenges you have faced as a young business leader and how you overcame them.

*Maximum word count: 300*

4. Provide an overview of your five-year goals and strategies for future business growth, detailing how you are working towards achieving them.

*Maximum word count: 300*

5. Outline the reasons why you are an outstanding young business leader.

*Maximum word count: 400*

# OUTSTANDING BUSINESS LEADER

THE OUTSTANDING BUSINESS LEADER AWARD RECOGNISES AN INSPIRATIONAL BUSINESS LEADER AGED 36 YEARS OR OVER AT THE TIME OF ENTRY WHO HAS DEMONSTRATED A COMMITMENT TO THEIR WORKPLACE, INDUSTRY, AND THE COMMUNITY THROUGH LEADERSHIP, WHILST PROVIDING MENTORSHIP TO OTHERS.

## ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants are required to demonstrate their ability to lead and inspire people, showcasing exceptional people leadership skills, while demonstrating how they have effectively utilised resources to achieve successful outcomes and driven innovation over the past 18 months of being an Outstanding business leader. To be eligible to enter this category, the individual must have held senior management or executive level position within their organisation for a minimum of 18 months at the time of entry

## AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK LIST

- I am aged 36 or over years at the time of entry.
- I am not an employee, Regional President, State Councillor or Board Member of NSW Business Chamber Limited.
- I have not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- I am not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.

## QUESTIONS

Entrants' full name:

Current job title:

Date of birth:

Name of your organisation or business:

1. Provide a brief profile, including your current role and scope of responsibilities.

*Maximum word count: 200*

2. Detail the specific activities and initiatives you have undertaken to reshape your workplace, industry or community to create a smarter and more inclusive future, with examples of how you have used your leadership skills.

*Maximum word count: 400*

3. Describe the key challenges you have faced as a business leader and how you overcame them.

*Maximum word count: 300*

4. Provide an overview of your five-year goals and strategies for future business growth, detailing how you are working towards achieving them.

*Maximum word count: 300*

5. Outline the reasons why you are an outstanding business leader, including the ways in which you provide mentorship to others.

*Maximum word count: 400*

# EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

THE EMPLOYER OF CHOICE AWARD RECOGNISES A BUSINESS THAT HAS IMPLEMENTED STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES TO CREATE A STIMULATING AND SUPPORTIVE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT.

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## ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants are required to demonstrate their achievements over the past 12 months across the key areas of employee recruitment, engagement and retention. Category criteria are based on initiatives that have had a positive impact on both employees and the business.

## AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK LIST

- ☑ The business has been trading for a continuous period of two years or more and is not bankrupt or trading insolvent at the time of entry.
- ☑ A representative of this business has not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- ☑ A representative of this business is not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.

## QUESTIONS

1. What are the initiatives you have undertaken to develop a positive workplace culture within your business?  
*Maximum word count: 400*
2. Describe how your business adopts inclusive practices and recognises the needs of a diverse workforce, including examples.  
*Maximum word count: 400*
3. Excluding business growth or expansion, what percentage of staff turnover has there been in your business in the previous 12 months and what are the reasons for this turnover?  
*Maximum word count: 300*
4. How does your business empower its workforce to develop their skills, contribute to a positive workplace culture and deepen their engagement with the business and the community?  
*Maximum word count: 400*
5. Detail measurable evidence outlining how these initiatives make you an employer of choice.  
*Maximum word count: 400*



# EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION

THE EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION AWARD RECOGNISES A BUSINESS THAT HAS IMPLEMENTED INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR NEW AND EXISTING NEEDS THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OR IMPROVEMENT OF A PRODUCT, TECHNOLOGY, OR APPLICATION THAT IMPACTS THE WIDER COMMUNITY.

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## ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants are required to demonstrate their achievements over the past 12 months at the time of entry across the key area of innovation.

## AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK LIST

- ☑ The business has been trading for a continuous period of two or more years and is not bankrupt or trading insolvent at the time of entry.
- ☑ A representative of this business has not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- ☑ A representative of this business is not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.

## QUESTIONS

1. Outline the innovation implemented and how it has addressed a new or existing need.  
*Maximum word count: 400*
2. Describe why the innovation is unique within your industry and how it differentiates your business from its competitors.  
*Maximum word count: 300*
3. Describe how the innovation was received by the market and external stakeholders.  
*Maximum word count: 300*
4. Demonstrate how the innovation has or is likely to have a positive impact on business or the community.  
*Maximum word count: 400*
5. Provide measurable evidence of how the innovation has improved the identified need, driven growth and contributed to the success of your business.  
*Maximum word count: 400*

# EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY

THE EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY AWARD RECOGNISES A BUSINESS THAT HAS DEMONSTRATED ITS COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES AND IS WORKING TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF ITS OPERATIONS ON THE ENVIRONMENT.

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## ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants are required to demonstrate their achievements over the past 12 months at time of entry across the key area of environmental sustainability. Category criteria are based on initiatives and projects executed within the business not related to its core offering.

## AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK LIST

- ✔ The business has been trading for a continuous period of two years or more and is not bankrupt or trading insolvent at the time of entry.
- ✔ A representative of this business has not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- ✔ A representative of this business is not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.

## QUESTIONS

1. Outline your business sustainability goals and objectives including measurable targets.  
*Maximum word count: 300*
2. Outline the initiatives you have implemented to achieve sustainable practices within your business.  
*Maximum word count: 300*
3. Describe your sustainability achievements over the past 12 months including environmental outcomes.  
*Maximum word count: 300*
4. Describe how you involve your workforce and external stakeholders in your sustainability initiatives.  
*Maximum word count: 400*
5. Detail measurable evidence explaining how your business sustainability practices have improved business operations, driven growth and/or contributed to the success of your business.  
*Maximum word count: 400*

# OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

THE OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY ORGANISATION AWARD RECOGNISES AN ORGANISATION THAT WORKS TO IMPROVE THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL, OR ENVIRONMENTAL WELLBEING OF THE COMMUNITY.

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## ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants are required to demonstrate their commitment over the past 12 months to being an outstanding community organisation. This category is open to social enterprises and not-for-profit organisations that have been trading for a period of over 24 months at time of entry.

## AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK LIST

- ✔ The organisation has been trading for a continuous period of two or more years and is not bankrupt or trading insolvent at the time of entry.
- ✔ The organisation has not entered the categories of Outstanding New Business, Excellence in Micro Business, Excellence in Small Business or Excellence in Business.
- ✔ A representative of this business has not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- ✔ A representative of this business is not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.

## QUESTIONS

1. Explain the social purpose of your organisation and how it contributes to the social, cultural, or environmental wellbeing of the community.  
*Maximum word count: 300*
2. Provide an overview of your organisation, including the product or service you deliver within the community.  
*Maximum word count: 200*
3. Provide an overview of the key features of your business development strategy and projected outcomes for the future.  
*Maximum word count: 300*
4. Demonstrate how your organisation contributes to the local economy in your region.  
*Maximum word count: 400*
5. Outline the key challenges your organisation has faced over the past 12 months and explain how you have managed the impact of these challenges.  
*Maximum word count: 400*

# OUTSTANDING VISITOR EXPERIENCE

THE OUTSTANDING VISITOR EXPERIENCE AWARD RECOGNISES A BUSINESS THAT UNDERSTANDS THE IMPORTANCE OF VISITOR ENGAGEMENT FOR A REGION'S ECONOMY\* AND REPUTATION. THE BUSINESS NEEDS TO ARTICULATE HOW THEY PROMOTE THE REGION AS WELL AS OFFERING AN EXCEPTIONAL VISITOR EXPERIENCE.

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## ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants are required to demonstrate how their business showcases the Region/ community and how their offering is unique within their industry.

## AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK LIST

- ☑ This business has been trading for a continuous period of two years or more and is not bankrupt or trading insolvent at the time of entry.
- ☑ A representative of this business has not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- ☑ A representative of this business is not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.

## QUESTIONS

1. Provide an overview of your business and your target market/s.  
*Maximum word count: 200*
2. Describe why your service offering is unique within your industry and differentiates your business from competitors.  
*Maximum word count: 300*
3. Outline your customer service strategy and how your business implements this strategy to ensure visitor satisfaction.  
*Maximum word count: 300*
4. Demonstrate how your business attracts and engages visitors to the Region, including measurable targets.  
*Maximum word count: 400*
5. Provide an overview of the key features of your strategy and plans related to the visitor economy\* in the next twelve months, at the time of entry.  
*Maximum word count: 400*

# OUTSTANDING NEW BUSINESS

THE OUTSTANDING NEW BUSINESS AWARD RECOGNISES A START-UP BUSINESS THAT HAS EFFECTIVELY DRIVEN GROWTH AND IS ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THE POTENTIAL TO ACHIEVE FUTURE SUCCESS.

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## ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants are required to demonstrate their commitment over the past 12 months to being an outstanding start-up. This category is open to new businesses trading for a period of less than 24 months at time of entry.

## AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK LIST

- ✔ This business has been trading for a period of less than two years and is not bankrupt or trading insolvent at the time of entry.
- ✔ This business has not been purchased or acquired and is not part of a franchise.
- ✔ The business has not entered the categories of Outstanding Community Organisation, Excellence in Micro Business, Excellence in Small Business or Excellence in Business.
- ✔ A representative of this business has not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- ✔ A representative of this business is not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.

## QUESTIONS

1. Provide an overview of your new business including the product or service delivered to the market, how you identified it as a market need and who your target customer is.

*Maximum word count: 200*

2. Provide an overview of the key features of your business development strategy and projected outcomes for the future.

*Maximum word count: 300*

3. Describe why your product or service offering is unique within your industry and differentiates your business from competitors.

*Maximum word count: 300*

4. Detail the measurable growth and key milestones you have achieved since launching your business.

*Maximum word count: 400*

5. Describe the key challenges your business has faced as a new business and how you overcame them.

*Maximum word count: 400*

# EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

THIS EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AWARD RECOGNISES BUSINESSES THAT ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF A DIVERSE COMMUNITY, INCLUDING SENIORS, PEOPLE FROM CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CALD) BACKGROUNDS, AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY. AN INCLUSIVE BUSINESS FACILITATES THE NEEDS OF ALL ITS EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS.

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## ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants are required to demonstrate their commitment over the past 12 months at the time of entry to address the needs of a diverse community. This category is open to businesses that have been trading for a continuous period of two or more years.

## AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK LIST

- ☑ The organisation has been trading for a continuous period of two or more years and is not bankrupt or trading insolvent at the time of entry.
- ☑ A representative of this business has not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- ☑ A representative of this business is not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.

## QUESTIONS

1. Outline your current staff level and diversity – including employees with disability, older people (over 55), women, young people (18-24 years), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from CALD backgrounds.  
*Maximum word count: 200*

2. Identify and describe your positive and/or proactive inclusive practices within the business that go beyond regulatory compliance.  
*Maximum word count: 350*

3. Describe your HR and employment hiring practices that demonstrate your commitment to being an inclusive employer.  
*Maximum word count: 350*

4. Identify and describe how your business has created an accessible and inclusive environment that is welcoming for customers with a disability, seniors, and people from CALD backgrounds.  
*Maximum word count: 400*

5. Explain why your business embarked on being more accessible and inclusive and describe what further actions you will take in the future to become more accessible and inclusive to employees and customers.  
*Maximum word count: 400*

# EXCELLENCE IN MICRO BUSINESS

THE EXCELLENCE IN MICRO BUSINESS AWARD RECOGNISES A BUSINESS THAT HAS EFFECTIVELY DRIVEN GROWTH AND IS ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THE SPECIFIC STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED TO ACHIEVE BUSINESS SUCCESS AND/OR RESILIENCE.

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## ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants are required to demonstrate their achievements over the past 12 months at the time of entry across the key area of business excellence. This category is open to businesses with less than 5 employees at the time of entry, who have been trading for a period of over 24 months at time of entry.

## AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK LIST

- ☑ This business has been trading for a continuous period of two years or more and is not bankrupt or trading insolvent at the time of entry.
- ☑ This business has less than 5 employees on the payroll in Australia at the time of entry.
- ☑ This business has not entered the categories of Outstanding Community Organisation, Outstanding New Business, Excellence in Small Business or Excellence in Business.
- ☑ A representative of this business has not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- ☑ A representative of this business is not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.

## QUESTIONS

1. Detail what your business goals and key milestones were for the previous 12 months and how you achieved all or part of them.

*Maximum word count: 300*

2. Provide an overview of the key features of your business plan including goals, innovations, strategies, projected outcomes for the future.

*Maximum word count: 400*

3. Describe why your product or service offering is unique within your industry and how it differentiates your business from its competitors.

*Maximum word count: 400*

4. Demonstrate how your business contributes to the local economy in your region.

*Maximum word count: 400*

5. Outline the key challenges your business has faced over the past 12 months from time of entry and explain how you have managed the impact of these challenges on your workforce and external stakeholders, as well as the impact they have had on your strategic direction.

*Maximum word count: 400*

# EXCELLENCE IN SMALL BUSINESS

THE EXCELLENCE IN SMALL BUSINESS AWARD RECOGNISES A BUSINESS THAT HAS EFFECTIVELY DRIVEN GROWTH AND IS ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THE SPECIFIC STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED TO ACHIEVE BUSINESS SUCCESS AND/OR RESILIENCE.

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## ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants are required to demonstrate their achievements over the past 12 months at the time of entry across the key area of business excellence. This category is open to businesses with 5 to 20 employees at the time of entry, who have been trading for a period of over 24 months at the time of entry.

## AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK LIST

- ☑ This business has been trading for a continuous period of two years or more and is not bankrupt or trading insolvent at the time of entry.
- ☑ This business has 5 to 20 employees on the payroll in Australia at the time of entry.
- ☑ This business has not entered the categories of Outstanding Community Organisation, Outstanding New Business, Excellence in Micro Business or Excellence in Business.
- ☑ A representative of this business has not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- ☑ A representative of this business is not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.

## QUESTIONS

1. Detail what your business goals and key milestones were for the previous 12 months at the time of entry and how you achieved all or part of them.

*Maximum word count: 300*

2. Provide an overview of the key features of your business plan including goals, innovations, strategies, projected outcomes for the future.

*Maximum word count: 400*

3. Describe why your product or service offering is unique within your industry and differentiates your business from competitors.

*Maximum word count: 400*

4. Demonstrate how your business contributes to the local economy in your region.

*Maximum word count: 400*

5. Outline the key challenges your business has faced over the past 12 months at the time of entry and explain how you have managed the impact of these challenges on your workforce and external stakeholders, as well as the impact they have had on your strategic direction.

*Maximum word count: 400*



# EXCELLENCE IN LARGE BUSINESS

THE EXCELLENCE IN LARGE BUSINESS AWARD RECOGNISES A BUSINESS THAT HAS EFFECTIVELY DRIVEN GROWTH AND IS ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THE SPECIFIC STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED TO ACHIEVE BUSINESS SUCCESS AND/OR RESILIENCE.

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## ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants are required to demonstrate their achievements over the past 12 months across the key area of business excellence. This category is open to businesses with 21 or more employees at the time of entry, who have been trading for a period of over 24 months at time of entry.

## AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK LIST

- ☑ This business has been trading for a continuous period of two years or more and is not bankrupt or trading insolvent at the time of entry.
- ☑ This business has 21 or more employees on the payroll in Australia at the time of entry.
- ☑ This business has not entered the categories of Outstanding Community Organisation, Outstanding New Business, Excellence in Micro Business or Excellence in Small Business.
- ☑ A representative of this business has not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- ☑ A representative of this business is not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.

## QUESTIONS

1. Detail what your business goals and key milestones were for the previous 12 months at the time of entry and how you achieved all or part of them.

*Maximum word count: 300*

2. Provide an overview of the key features of your business plan including goals, innovations, strategies, projected outcomes for the future.

*Maximum word count: 400*

3. Describe why your product or service offering is unique within your industry and differentiates your business from competitors.

*Maximum word count: 400*

4. Demonstrate how your business contributes to the local economy in your region.

*Maximum word count: 400*

5. Outline the key challenges your business has faced over the past 12 months at the time of entry and explain how you have managed the impact of these challenges on your workforce and external stakeholders, as well as the impact they have had on your strategic direction.

*Maximum word count: 400*

# SHOALHAVEN ARTISAN EXCELLENCE AWARD

RECOGNISING THE SMALLER, ARTISAN RANGE OF FOOD, BEVERAGE AND HOSPITALITY SERVICES IN THE REGION. THE ARTISAN EXCELLENCE AWARD IS OPEN TO SMALL PROVIDERS OF TOURISM, ENTERTAINMENT, AND HOSPITALITY SERVICES. BUSINESSES ELIGIBLE TO ENTER INCLUDE SMALL-SCALE PROVIDERS, MAKERS, GROWERS OR HOSPITALITY BUSINESSES

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## ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants are required to demonstrate their achievements over the past 12 months across the key area of business excellence.

## AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK LIST

- ✔ This category is open to businesses who have been trading for a period over 24 months and are not bankrupt or trading insolvent at the time of entry.
- ✔ Hospitality businesses must have no more than 10 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees at the time of entry.
- ✔ A representative of this business has not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- ✔ A representative of this business is not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.

## QUESTIONS

1. Provide an overview of your artisan business, including your unique offering and connection to the Shoalhaven region.

*Maximum word count: 300*

2. Describe the specific initiatives you have implemented to create a distinctive customer experience that sets your business apart from competitors.

*Maximum word count: 300*

3. Outline how your small hospitality business has adapted to challenges and demonstrated resilience over the past 12-24 months.

*Maximum word count: 400*

4. Detail the measurable results you have achieved, both financial and non-financial to showcase excellence.

*Maximum word count: 400*

5. Explain your business's contribution to the local food community and how you actively participate in strengthening the Shoalhaven's reputation.

*Maximum word count: 400*

# *Business* **OF THE YEAR**

This award is awarded to a Business that has been judged to be an outstanding business, that has provided an entry that demonstrates achievements and excellence over and above all other entrants. This award will be judged by a panel of three judges that have not judged any other entries in the awards.

**BUSINESS OF THE YEAR IS OPEN TO ALL WINNERS OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:**

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EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

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EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION

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OUTSTANDING SUSTAINABILITY

---

EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

---

EXCELLENCE IN MICRO BUSINESS

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EXCELLENCE IN SMALL BUSINESS

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EXCELLENCE IN LARGE BUSINESS

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*Good  
Luck!*

WE LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING YOUR  
AWARD ENTRY, AND THANK YOU FOR  
PARTICIPATING IN THE 2025 SHOALHAVEN  
BUSINESS AWARDS.

2025  
**SHOALHAVEN**  
BUSINESS AWARDS

[WWW.SHOALHAVENBUSINESSCHAMBER.COM.AU/AWARDS](http://WWW.SHOALHAVENBUSINESSCHAMBER.COM.AU/AWARDS)