



North Coast Regional Tourism Awards 2025

Entrant FAQ

The North Coast Regional Tourism Awards are facilitated by [NSW Tourism Association](#). This FAQ has been developed to help you confidently navigate your awards journey – from registering your account to understanding how the program supports your business and what comes next.

Getting Started

How do I access the Awards Portal?

Use your business email to check for an existing account (most businesses previously accredited or entered in the last 5–6 years already have one). If unsure, contact the Awards Team to confirm or update access.

Awards Portal: <https://atic.qualitytourismaustralia.com>

If already a member of NSW Tourism Association, use the primary email address linked to your membership to access the member's only rate.

Businesses wishing to [join NSW Tourism Association](#), will receive the member's rate for entry and complementary access to the [Quality Tourism Accreditation programs](#).

How do I nominate?

Once logged in, click the **Nominate** button (top right). You'll be asked for:

- Business details
- Category selection
- Payment

Nominate

Nominations for the 2025 Australian Tourism Awards are now open for selected states.

Once payment is received, your nomination will then be approved, and you can start your entry.

How do I submit multiple nominations?

You need to complete a nomination and payment for each category you wish to enter. This should be done from within the one portal account.

What happens after nomination?

Once payment has been received, you will receive access to the submission questions and can start on the Business Standards and award submission.



How much does it cost to enter?

- **Members:** \$220 + GST
- **Non-members:** \$295 + GST

Note: The fee for the Regional Tourism Awards includes automatic entry into the NSW Tourism Awards. This fee also includes ability to update the submission for state entry, entrant support programs and an opportunity for Draft Review for both Regional and State level submissions.

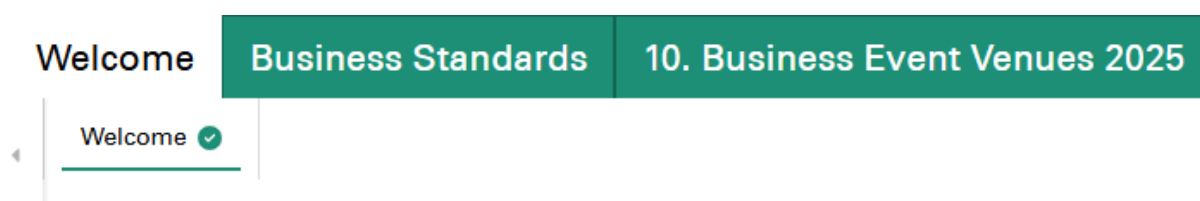
Business Standards & Accreditation

What are Business Standards?

All entrants are required to demonstrate that they meet industry best practice standards. Businesses who already hold **Sustainable Tourism Accreditation**, as part of membership with NSW Tourism Association, have already demonstrated this. Businesses that are not Sustainable Tourism accredited, must complete the **Business Standards** to be eligible to enter the Regional Tourism Awards. These standards include:

- Licences, permits, and insurance
- Policies on HR, marketing, risk, sustainability, customer service
- Evidence of good business planning and continuous improvement

The Business Standards tab will appear next to the submission questions for all non-accredited businesses. These must be submitted and approved **by 27 April**.



Business standards are not required to be completed again for the NSW Tourism Awards. Once business standards have been completed once, they only require updating for future year's participation.

What if I'm entering multiple categories?

Business Standards can be duplicated across entries – contact the team to activate this feature.



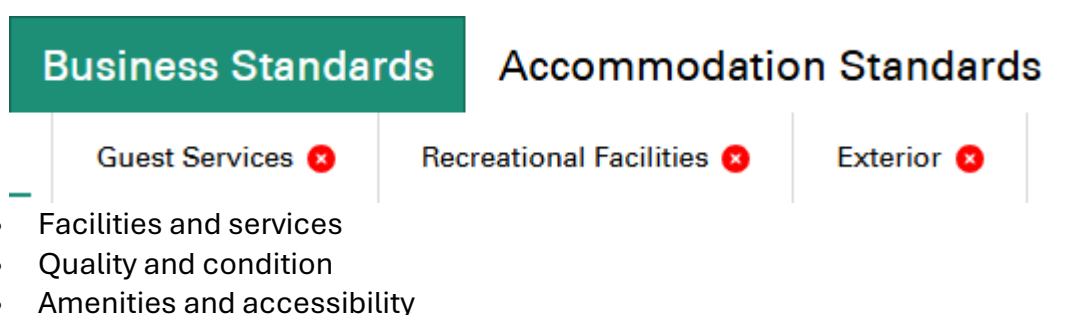
How do I become formally accredited?

You can formalise your Business Standards into Sustainable Tourism Accreditation by joining NSW Tourism Association.

Accommodation Categories

We're not star-rated – can we still enter?

Yes, but you must complete **both Business and Accommodation Standards** to demonstrate that you meet your category's star rating level (e.g. 4 - 4.5 Star Deluxe). These standards cover:



You can formalise these into **Star Rating Accreditation** by joining NSW Tourism Association.

Accessibility & Ecotourism

We're entering the Accessibility category – what do we need to do?

If you are not Sustainable Accredited or Accessibility Accredited, you'll need to complete both **Business Standards** and **Accessibility Standards**. If the business is already **Sustainable Tourism** accredited, only Accessibility Standards will be required.

You must meet criteria in at least one of the following areas:

- Vision
- Low Hearing
- Limited Mobility (wheelchair / scooter access)
- Cognitive Disabilities
- Autism Spectrum



Accessibility standards require identification of the property's facilities, amenities, disability training and meeting of Australian Standards through multiple check boxes and short answer questions. Note: question sets will vary dependent on business type.

We're entering the Ecotourism category – do we need to do more?

Yes. If you are not Sustainable Accredited, you'll need to complete both **Business Standards** and **Ecostar Standards**. If the business is already **Sustainable Tourism** accredited, only EcoStar Standards will be required.

Businesses must demonstrate they meet the following:

- Managing impact and disturbance on the environment
- Contributing to conservation and sustainability
- Establishing an environmental Risk Management Strategy
- Supporting and benefiting the local community
- Recognition of local cultural and heritage sensitivity

Business Standards	ECOSTAR Business Standards	05. Ecotourism 2025
Policy ❌	Built Environment Performance ✅	Sustainable Resource Use ✅
		Natural Environment Protection and Environmentally Responsible Behaviour ❌
		Working with L

How do I become formally accredited?

Both Accessibility and Ecotourism standards can be formalised via [NSW Tourism Association membership](#).

About the Entry Process

How are the Regional Awards different from the State Awards?

The questions are identical, but the Regional version is simplified:

- Lower word counts
- Fewer examples required
- Fewer categories
- No consumer score
- No onsite visits
- Shorter qualifying period (1 July 2024 – 31 March 2025)

Entries are submitted via the same portal, therefore when completing your entry with reduced requirements, you will need to enter 'N/A' into additional fields to remove the need for completion.



Refer to the Regional Tourism Award [category information](#) for specific regional level requirements.

What if I'm progressing to the NSW Tourism Awards?

All entries submitted for the Regional Tourism Awards are automatically entered into the NSW Tourism Awards. The fee for the Regional Tourism Awards includes automatic entry into the NSW Tourism Awards and includes entrant support programs and an opportunity for Draft Review for both Regional and State level submissions.

You can add more examples and expand your answers based on judge's feedback and new activity from 1 April – 30 June. This strengthens your state submission.

Can I change categories for the NSW Tourism Awards?

Yes. In cases where there is a more specific or relevant category at NSW level, that wasn't offered at Regional level, it is possible or may be required to be moved into that category for the NSW Tourism Awards. For example:

- Tourist Attractions with 100,000+ visitors annually *will be moved to* Major Tourist Attractions category
- Festivals and Events with 50,000+ attendees *will be moved to* Major Festivals & Events category
- Tour and Transport Operators with 15+ FTEs *will be moved to* Major Tour & Transport Operators category
- Tourism Restaurants and Catering Services *will have the option to move to* Excellence in Food Tourism category

Please discuss with the Program Manager if this applies to your entry.

Draft Review & Judge Feedback

Can I get feedback on a draft before final submission?

Yes. Submit a complete draft by **25 April** to receive judge feedback before the final submission deadline of **9 May**.

You'll receive a notification via the portal once your feedback is ready.

[Show Incomplete](#)[Saved ✓](#)[Submit Assessment](#)[Submit for Draft Review](#)

Digital Review

What is the digital review?

Up to 10% of your final score is based on a digital review by an independent judge who assesses:

- Website functionality and design
- Social media presence
- Search engine visibility
- Listings on external platforms like ATDW
- Regional alignment and promotional impact

This review is separate from the written submission and is a great opportunity to showcase your brand's digital strength.

Ensure your website is at it's best to receive maximum points.

What Happens After the Regional Awards?

- **Finalists are announced:** Tuesday 17 June
- **Winners are announced:** Thursday 31 July @ Gala Event, Elements of Byron
- **All Regional entrants** are automatically progressed to the NSW Tourism Awards – with the opportunity to update their entry.

This seamless transition is designed to maximise exposure, enhance learning, and build your business reputation across all levels of tourism awards.

About the North Coast Regional Awards Program



The North Coast Regional Tourism Awards are delivered in partnership with NSW Tourism Association and Destination North Coast. They are aligned with the **Quality Tourism Accreditation** and **Australian Tourism Industry Council** and allow for easier entry at regional level, with strong support and an enhanced pathway to state and national. The entry process is designed to support tourism businesses grow through:

- Weekly webinars
- Expert judging
- Media and PR exposure
- Constructive feedback
- Pathways to state and national recognition

Hear it from a Past Entrant

“Winning Gold at the Regional and NSW Tourism Awards, and then achieving Silver at the Australian level, has been an incredible journey for the Northern Rivers Rail Trail. The North Coast Tourism Awards laid the foundation for that success, providing invaluable feedback, expert guidance, and—thanks to welcome changes in 2025—a seamless transition from regional to state award programs.

The Regional Tourism Awards Program is a powerful tool. The program helps refine your operations, highlights your strengths, and drives continuous improvement forward. The opportunity to receive judges’ feedback and gain industry-wide exposure has been a game-changer for us. Even six months after our State win, we’re still benefiting from a steady stream of earned media.

If you’re passionate about what you do and want to elevate your business, I highly encourage you to get involved. The rewards go far beyond a trophy—it’s about growth, credibility, and taking your business to the next level”.

Dean Cooper, Regional Lead, Northern Rivers Rail Trail

NSW Tourism Association Member Benefits

Members of the NSW Tourism Association receive:

- Complimentary access to suite of **Quality Tourism Accreditation** programs
- Free **ReviewPro** account
- Resources, research and events

- Advocacy and business support
- Access to future services (HR tools, insurance, etc.)



Contact the Awards Team

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