

ENTRANTS GUIDE

For the following categories:

- 01. Tourist Attractions
- 08. Tour & Transport Operators
- 09. Adventure Tourism
- 10. Tourism Restaurants & Catering Services
- 11. Tourism Wineries, Distilleries and Breweries
- 12. Caravan & Holiday Parks
- 13. Hosted Accommodation
- 14. Self-contained Accommodation
- 15. 4-4.5 Star Deluxe Accommodation
- 16. 5 Star Luxury Accommodation

2025

NSW Tourism Association

This Entrants Guide is created for the Regional Tourism Awards program, for which there are a few important differences compared to the NSW Tourism Awards. When compiling your submission, it is recommended that you refer to the Regional Tourism Question Set for the reduced requirements per question as this differs slightly between categories. This Entrants Guide relates to the General Set of questions which is relevant for the categories listed above.

A summary of the differences between the Regional Tourism Awards and the NSW Tourism Awards list listed below:

North Coast Regional Tourism Awards

The North Coast Regional Tourism Awards celebrate tourism excellence within the North Coast region, with some key differences from the state awards:

- Word count: **No minimum – maximum 5,000 words**
- **Accessible category limit:** 2,000 words
- **18 category options** – no 'Major' categories
- Qualifying period: **1 July 2024 – 31 March 2025**
- **1 - 2 examples required per question**
- **Consumer Score (GRI) not used**
- **No onsite visits**
- Digital review is included
- **Business Standards** required unless QTF Sustainable Tourism Accredited
- **1 Accessible Tourism Badge** required for Accessible category
- **Total score: 80 points** for some categories (due to GRI removal), Accessible Tourism: 50 points
- **Free Draft Review Service** available
- **Entry automatically progresses to NSW Tourism Awards** (no guaranteed placing)

NSW Tourism Awards

The NSW Tourism Awards are a state-level program recognizing excellence across a broad range of tourism categories. Key features include:

- Word count: **4,000 to 7,500 words**
- **Accessible category limit:** 3,000 words
- **30 category options**, including 'Major' categories
- Qualifying period: **1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025**
- **3 - 5 examples required per question**
- **20-point Consumer Score (GRI)** included
- **Onsite visits** are conducted but not scored
- Digital review is included
- **Business Standards** required unless QTF Sustainable Tourism Accredited
- **1 Accessible Tourism Badge** required for Accessible category
- **Total score: 100 points**, Accessible Tourism: 55 points
- **Free Draft Review Service** available
- **Gold winners** in national categories (1 - 26) progress to the **Australian Tourism Awards**

Important Note: The portal is based on the NSW Question Set with the maximum examples requested. To meet the reduced North Coast Regional Awards requirements, please add NA to additional example options to enable submission.

CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS GUIDE	6
Queries	6
SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW.....	7
1.1 Introduction to the Tourism Awards	7
1.2 Categories	7
1.3 Process to Enter.....	8
1.4 Key Dates	8
1.5 Awards Portal	9
Understanding the portal	9
Log-in to your account.....	9
Using the dashboard	10
Portal tips	10
Troubleshooting.....	11
1.6 Judging	12
Judging process	12
Determining finalists and winners.....	12
Breakdown of Scores	13
What are judges looking for?	13
Tips from national judges	13
SECTION 2. GETTING STARTED.....	15
2.1 Media & Promotional.....	15
100-word description	16
2.2 Planning is key	16
Who's writing?	16
Start early & allocate time	16
2.3 Business Standards	17
Resources	19
Frequently Asked Questions.....	19
SECTION 3 DIGITAL REVIEW	22
4.1 Scoring	23
What will be checked?	23
SECTION 5 IMAGES	26

5.1 General tips	26
5.2 Rules	27
5.3 Examples.....	28
5.4 How to upload images.....	32
SECTION 6. Comprehensive Answer Guide	33
6.1 Introduction.....	33
6.2 Essential Tips Before Getting Started	33
6.3 Using the Comprehensive Answer Guide	38
6.4 Overview of Business	39
Question 1.1 5 points	39
Understanding Question 1.1.....	39
What Judges Are Looking For	40
Tips for Crafting Your Answer.....	40
Suggested approach and examples	40
Supporting Evidence	43
6.5 Excellence in Business & Product Development.....	47
Question 2.1 10 points	47
Understanding Question 2.1.....	50
What Judges Are Looking For	50
Tips for Crafting Your Answer.....	50
Suggested Approach and Examples.....	51
Supporting Evidence	53
6.6 Excellence in Marketing.....	55
Question 3.1 5 points	55
Understanding Question 3.1.....	56
What Judges Are Looking For	57
Tips for Crafting Your Answer.....	57
Suggested Approach and Examples.....	58
Supporting Evidence	60
Question 3.2 10 points.....	62
Understanding Question 3.2.....	64
What Judges Are Looking For	65
Tips for Crafting Your Answer.....	65
Suggested Approach and Examples.....	66
Supporting Evidence	68

6.7 Excellence in Customer Service	69
Question 4.1 10 points	69
Understanding Question 4.1	72
What Judges Are Looking For	72
Tips for Crafting Your Answer.....	72
Suggested Approach and Examples.....	73
Supporting Evidence	77
Question 4.2 5 points	78
Understanding Question 4.2.....	79
What Judges Are Looking For	79
Tips for Crafting Your Answer.....	79
Suggested Approach and Examples.....	80
Supporting Evidence	82
6.8 Excellence in Sustainable & Responsible Business Practices	83
Question 5.1 10 points	83
Understanding Question 5.1	86
What Judges Are Looking For	86
Tips for Crafting Your Answer.....	86
Suggested Approach and Examples.....	91
Supporting Evidence	97
6.9 Final Remarks.....	100
Question 6 0 points.....	100
Consider the following:.....	100
SECTION 7. NEARLY THERE – BEFORE YOU SUBMIT	101

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This Entrants Guide aims to help entrants through each stage of the Tourism Awards process, from collating the information you will require to start your submission through to submitting it online.

This guide also contains information on key dates, the rules for entry, the Business and Accommodation Standards pre-assessments, the consumer and online review components, the judging process and site visits, but most importantly, a question-by-question guide on how to answer each question.

We encourage you to refer to it regularly and to navigate through each section of this guide as you progress through the different stages of preparing and writing your submission – **one section at a time.**


If you are entering one of the following categories, this guide is for you:

- 01. Major Tourist Attractions**
- 02. Tourist Attractions**

Queries

For any Tourism Awards queries, please contact: Sarah Kerrsmith, Program Manager - Awards

 : programs@nswtourismassociation.com.au

 : 02 9089 8889

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction to the Tourism Awards

For over 40 years the Tourism Awards have showcased the country's leaders in tourism excellence. The Awards encourage businesses to meet and exceed industry standards and play an integral role in acknowledging business excellence together with outstanding innovation, industry professionalism and collaboration.

Preparing a Tourism Awards submission is a significant commitment, and it does require planning and resourcing – no matter the size of your business. It is not something you can put together in a day or two, even a week or two. However, countless tourism businesses that have entered the awards over the years report back the many benefits they see in entering.

Not only do you have a chance of gaining recognition at both a state and national level, but the process of entering the Awards alone is invaluable. It forces you to step back from day-to-day operations and assess the performance of your business, review past efforts and plan for the future.

Entering the Tourism Awards will give you the opportunity to:

- **Benchmark** your business against peers and competitors
- **Develop** an accurate overview of your business position
- **Assess** and improve your business practices
- **Identify** opportunities for business growth
- **Receive** valuable feedback on your current business practices from industry experts
- **Increase** brand awareness and leverage marketing opportunities
- **Gain** recognition from industry
- **Enhance** your credibility as a Tourism Award win or finalist status can boost your reputation among customers and industry peers.
- **Highlight** to customers your aspiration and commitment to tourism excellence
- **Acknowledge** the contribution of your team and motivate them to strive for excellence
- **Strengthen** your competitive edge by standing out in a crowded market

1.2 Categories

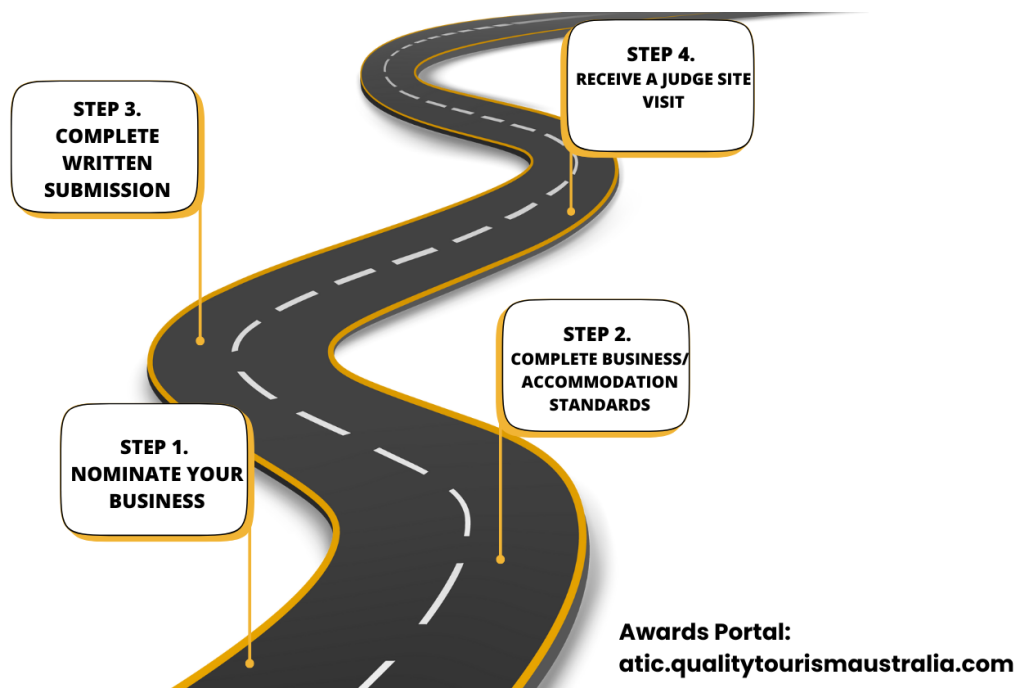
The North Coast Regional Tourism Awards have 18 categories – [view them here](#).

You will notice that the category numbers differ when using the portal for submission. The category numbers in the portal refer to the NSW/National category numbers.

It is important that you check the eligibility requirements for the category you are entering. If you do not meet the eligibility requirements you may be disqualified.

1.3 Process to Enter

There are four steps to entering the Tourism Awards:



NOTE: See more information about each stage further in the guide.

NOTE: North Coast Regional Tourism Award Entrants do not require a judge site visit. However, this will be a requirement for the NSW Tourism Awards entry.

1.4 Key Dates

- **Nominations Open:** Friday 10 March
- **Nominations Close:** Thursday 17 April
- **Business Standards due:** Sunday 27 April
- **Drafts Submissions due:** Friday 25 April
- **Submissions Close:** Friday 9 May
- **Finalists Announced:** Tuesday 10 June
- **Winners Announced:** Thursday 31 July

1.5 Awards Portal

Understanding the portal

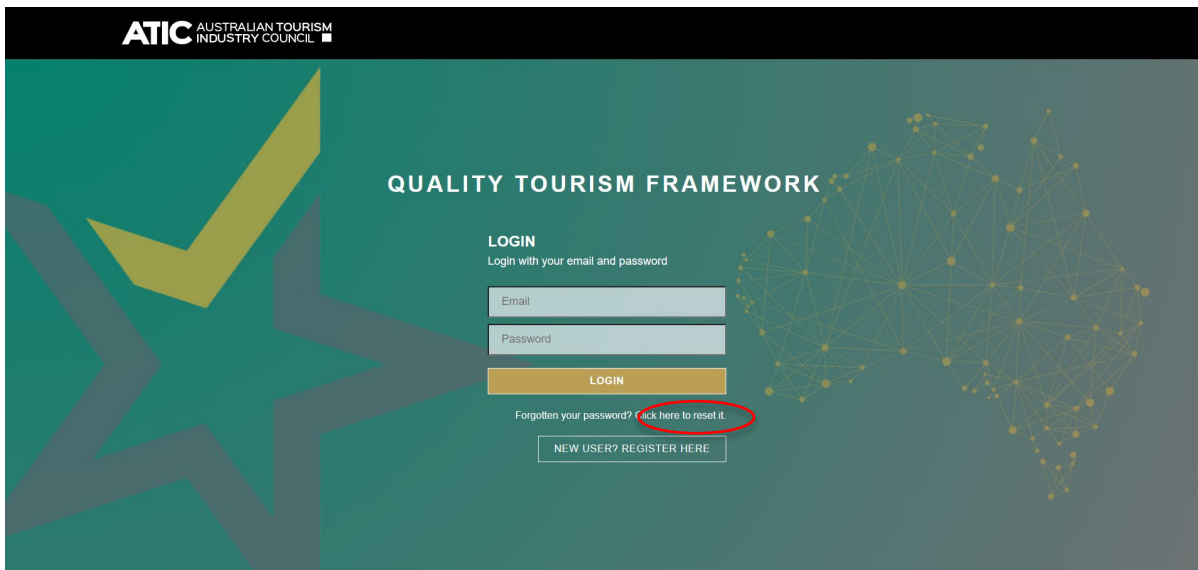
The Quality Tourism Australia portal is a national portal managed by the Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) and used by all States/Territories as the licensees.

The Quality Tourism Framework (Awards Portal) is an integrated online system that provides access to business development programs that support Australian tourism business operators to continually grow and develop their businesses. The Awards Portal was established by the Australian Tourism Industry Council, in association with various State and Territory Tourism Industry Councils.

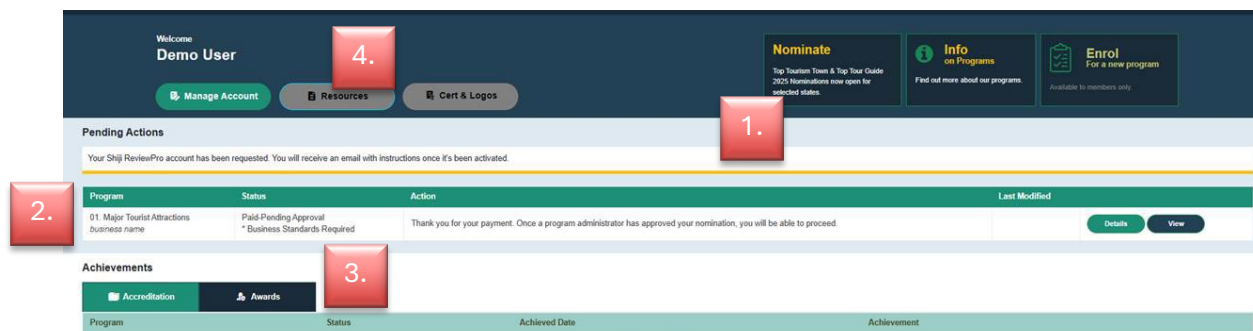
The whole process for the Tourism Awards is done via this portal, including nominations, pre-assessments and submissions.

Log-in to your account

Access the Awards Portal: atic.qualitytourismaustralia.com. If you do not remember your password, you can reset it – please see marked in red below.

The screenshot shows the login page for the Quality Tourism Framework. At the top left is the ATIC logo (Australian Tourism Industry Council). The page has a dark teal background with a large, stylized yellow and grey star on the left and a network of yellow dots connected by lines on the right. The text "QUALITY TOURISM FRAMEWORK" is centered. Below it is a "LOGIN" section with the instruction "Login with your email and password". There are two input fields: "Email" and "Password". Below these is a yellow "LOGIN" button. Under the button, there is a link "Forgotten your password? [Click here to reset it.](#)" where the text "Click here to reset it." is circled in red. At the bottom is a button that says "NEW USER? REGISTER HERE".

Using the dashboard



The screenshot shows the dashboard interface with the following elements:

- 1.** Points to the 'Nominations' section, which includes a 'NOMINATE' button and a message: 'Top Tourism Town & Top Tour Guide 2025 Nominations now open for selected states'.
- 2.** Points to the 'Pending Actions' section, which contains a table with columns: Program, Status, Action, and Last Modified. The table lists '01 Major Tourist Attractions' with a status of 'Paid-Pending Approval' and a note about business standards.
- 3.** Points to the 'Achievements' section, which includes tabs for 'Accreditation' and 'Awards'.
- 4.** Points to the top navigation bar, which includes a 'Manage Account' button and a 'Resources' link.

1. Click on this button to nominate into the awards

2. Once your nomination has been approved it will appear here. To work on your submission click 'GO TO'.

If you have any Business or Accommodation Standards to complete, they will also be listed here and you will see them when you open the entry.

3. Any submissions that you have completed or previous years' entries will be listed here.

4. Here you will find useful resources such as the User Guide for the awards dashboard.

Portal tips

- It's a good idea to log into the portal well before the due date to understand how it works and to get familiar with the formatting.
- If you are planning on drafting your submission on a Word or Google doc and then pasting into your submission in the Awards Portal, it is a good idea to log into the portal well before the submission due date to get familiar with the formatting of the Awards Portal.
- The way you format a table or answer may change once it is pasted into the Awards Portal from a Word or Google doc. You must take this into account when approaching the submission deadline because you may need to spend some time reformatting tables and answers within the Awards Portal.
- If you are creating a draft of your responses offline, aim to upload your responses as you progress through each question of your submission. The portal can become slow in the last few days before submissions close as multiple people will be using it.
- Ensure any business or accommodation standards are completed well in advance of the entry deadline.
- You can save your work in the Awards Portal before submitting it.
- Ensure any business or accommodation standards are completed a few days prior to the deadline. The deadline for these may be well before the Awards submission deadline.

Troubleshooting

Experiencing Issues with Portal

If you are experiencing delays or lost data, it could be for one of the following reasons.

- Check your connection speed and connection reliability, particularly if uploading data.
 - Most internet service providers will give you decent download speeds – to stream Netflix or access social media. However upload speeds tend to be much slower, and this is particularly prominent when you're uploading images to any online portal.
 - One of the simplest solutions is to plug in a LAN cable into the laptop. A cable is hugely faster than going over Wi-Fi, especially when that Wi-Fi is already under pressure by multiple people.
- Check the size of your images
 - If images are larger than the recommended size (Images must be no bigger than 10MB each in .jpeg or .png format - preferably 500dpi files), then the system won't accept it.
 - Resizing images to within (the recommended size outlined above) before uploading is recommended.
 - Upload one image at a time. Wait until an image has finished uploading before starting on the next one.

Pasting

- We know that most entrants work on their submission offline (on a Word doc), to then copy and paste answers into the portal. Please be mindful that there can be problems with the amount of content you are pasting at one time.
- Do not copy and paste multiple pages of text at the same time as the bandwidth can't cope.
- Pasting content from websites can often incur similar issues as there's styling and hidden characters in a website that adds to what is being pasted.
- Pasting is fine when done in moderation. A piece of text at a time – not multiple elements because unless you have a very good internet connection, it will create problems.
- Multiple people working on the same submission can override other's work.
- Your formatting and your word count may change from a Word or Google doc once pasted in the Awards Portal. The Awards Portal word count is the only one that is considered. Allow time to reformat your work once it is in the Awards Portal.

Outdated operating systems

- It is advised not to try filling in an Awards submission on your phone. Laptops are the best medium.
- Browsers like Chrome/Firefox/Edge offer the best experience and less issues.
- More recent operating systems, e.g., Windows 11, will also work better.

If none of the above are the issue, contact your Program Manager with the following information:

- Business name
- Which submission (if more than one)
- Device and browser type used
- Specific issues e.g., connection keeps timing out, freezing, losing information that was saved
- Any images/screenshots to demonstrate what the issue is or a word of source document that the entrant is working from.
- Copy of a file/image that was lost

Do not leave to the last minute!

This is a national portal used by all States and Territories. You may find that uploading your answers and images on the last day/hours will take much longer than if done earlier - everyone will be using the portal at the same time. Avoid the stress if you can.

1.6 Judging

Judging process

Judging the Tourism Awards is an intensive process with each judge investing a considerable amount of time to review, rate and provide feedback for each written submission. The judging panel is split into teams of three to independently score submissions from the categories allocated to them. After the reviewing period, a deliberation day occurs where the judging team confer with one another to review their scores and allocate winners. These results are looked over by an auditor as well as the Chair of Judges to authorise the final scoring of submissions.

Under no circumstances will judges be held responsible for any comment, viewpoint or expression made during their role as a judge.

Determining finalists and winners

Finalists and winners are determined by adding the following scores:

- The judges' overall score
- The digital review score

Please note that not all categories have a consumer rating or site visit score.

Breakdown of Scores

Submission Score	60 points
Digital Review Score	20 points
TOTAL	80 points

What are judges looking for?

- A well-written and clearly presented submission.
- Evidence of a well-managed and financially sound business.
- Clearly stated and measurable goals and strategies with clear outcomes.
- An innovative and strategic approach.
- Demonstrated flair, passion and enthusiasm for your business and the industry in general.
- Demonstration of tourism industry knowledge and evidence of your contribution to the industry.
- A recognition and understanding of target markets.
- A substantiated commitment to Responsible Tourism.

INCLUDE	AVOID
Logical and succinct answers	Meandering and 'wordy' answers, waffle
Quality photos that complement text (add captions where possible)	Poor-quality photos that are not relevant. Extensive text where a photo and brief description would have done
Clean presentation with clearly labelled charts and diagrams	Hard-to-read entries, charts and diagrams with no explanation
Evidence of great ideas, innovation & passion	Promising submissions that lose steam
Quotes and testimonials that support your answer	Generic responses using sweeping statements

Tips from national judges

1. **Your written submission** accounts for the majority of your total score, so commit to writing a great entry. Remember, the judges are reviewing what you put in your submission, they are not judging your actual product or service.
2. **Focus on the 'experiences'**. Judges want to know more about them and understand how they are impacting visitors.
3. **Avoid sweeping statements**. Always justify your statements – provide the 'why', figures, good testimonials and case studies, etc.



4. Information about the businesses' policies and procedures is often seen in the submissions, but entrants often fail to explain **how** these are used, how it relates to the question and again, **what impact** it has on the customers.
5. **Evoke emotion** – Judges read lots of submissions in a short timeframe. They want to be engaged in the story and feel the passion.
6. **Provide great customer service examples** – our industry is all about customer service, and we know that most operators would excel in this area. Unfortunately, entrants don't always provide the right examples under the 'Excellence in Customer Service' section. Ensure you address all points and provide your best-case studies.
7. Have the right text and caption with the images so the connection is clear.
8. **Sometimes less is more** – quality vs quantity. Focus on activities that link back to your business's overall strategies and your target markets. Also, you want to consider those that have a good story and strong evidence.
9. **Focus on the question wording** to clarify you have answered all parts of the question. Always check your response against the response guidance and tips in this guide.
10. Not all activities need to have fantastic results. Judges know that businesses deal with challenges all the time. It's ok to include things that didn't work too. Just explain why it didn't achieve the results you expected and what you've learnt from it.
11. **Never assume anything** – even if you are an iconic business, don't assume the judge knows anything about you or your region.

SECTION 2. GETTING STARTED

There's no doubt that the more prepared you are, the easier it will be to prepare a winning submission. Ideally you should be collating and preparing materials for your submission year-round, filing relevant information in a separate folder on your computer or in a hard copy. If you haven't done this, start now.

To prepare a Tourism Awards submission, you will need:

- Your Business Plan and Marketing Plan: if you're accredited there are various free templates and examples within the Quality Tourism Accreditation program.
- Visitor numbers for the qualifying period, as well as the previous year's figures to compare.
- Financial information (sales figures, revenue, profit margins etc.). You don't need to state actual figures in your submission, but percentage representations are a good idea.
- A clear description of your target markets and percentage breakdown of actual visitation by market.
- Copies of customer feedback and evidence of customer satisfaction – this could take the form of satisfaction surveys, feedback forms, TripAdvisor comments etc.
- Copies of PR activity and media coverage achieved during the qualifying period.
- Details of marketing and advertising activity, and results of activity.
- Examples of marketing collateral – brochures, flyers, posters and information on how they are distributed.
- Statistics on website traffic and social media usage.
- OHS and Risk Management policies and procedures.
- Staff development and training policies, and information on activities that took place during the qualifying period.

2.1 Media & Promotional

You can review and edit this section at any time, however it is recommended that you complete it early as your ten promotional images can take time to upload (especially close to the submission deadline). Getting your 100-word promotional description right is also something you don't want to be rushing at the last minute!

You are also required to nominate your media contact and who will collect the trophy on-stage if your entry is successful.

Images

Entrants are asked to provide an additional ten images (2 hero and 8 additional) which illustrate the business operations for media and promotional purposes.

Requirements:

- Images must be no bigger than 10MB each and in JPEG format
- Images are required to be high-resolution
- Preferably 500dpi files and in 1920 x 1080 in dimension

Please note:

- These images are separate from the images included throughout your submission.
- They won't be judged and will be used at the gala ceremony and in official awards promotion and publications.
- You can choose to provide/upload the same images that you have used within your submission, if relevant.
- Ensure these images are the hero images of your business though – consider, for instance, recent images you have used for marketing and advertising. You want to choose images that best represent your business and show a range of services and experiences (they should be relevant to the nominated category too). It is always good to include images with visitors and your staff if possible.
- Professionally shot photos are ideal, and a good investment for any tourism business.

100-word description

This description will be used to announce finalists and medallists during the Awards Gala, in promotional material, potentially by media, and in website listings. It is important that this is written in third person (not first!) and provides a brief snapshot of your product and/or business, as relevant to the category you have entered.

Please note this description (for external use) is separate from the 100-word description you provided when first nominating, which was intended to justify why you chose the category you did and qualify your eligibility for it (internal use).

2.2 Planning is key

There is no doubt that the more prepared you are, the easier it will be to create a winning submission. As mentioned previously, you should be collating and preparing materials for your submission year-round and filing relevant information. If you haven't done this, start now.

Who's writing?

Decide who will write the submission – most tourism operators write it in-house, but some outsource it to a specialist consultant. If you're planning to do this, allow plenty of time to brief your consultant and allow for drafts to be revised.

Though some tourism operators believe you need to employ a professional consultant to win an award, this isn't the case. Most award-winning submissions have been written by the business owners/managers themselves.

Start early & allocate time

It is of course different for all businesses, but as a guideline, preparing a winning submission may take anywhere between 20 to 50 hours from start to completion. And it will often involve many different people in the business. Planning and blocking out 'non-negotiable' time in your

calendar is critical, and the earlier you can start, the better, as then you can spread this time over a few months rather than a few weeks.

Before you start writing:

Create a Word or Google doc – then screenshot each question into the document along with the response guidance, as an image so it doesn't affect your word count.

Questions can change from year to year, so if you have entered before and are using an old submission as a base, don't forget to update the questions in your new version.

Hold a brainstorming session – the best way to start the process is to gather the relevant people in the business and brainstorm each question (using this guide). Dot point or create a mind map with all information and activities that could go under each question response. Some of them might not make it to the final edit, but it is best to get it all on paper at the start.

This process will also reveal any questions that require further consideration or research and determine what additional information is needed to write your submission.

Review judges' feedback – if you have previously entered the awards, dig out your previous submission and note any areas the judges suggested needing improvement. For example, if judges mentioned that your marketing outcomes were not tangible and measurable, make a note of this in your first draft so you don't forget to address it.

Note: the judges' feedback for previous entries can be found in the Awards Portal, under 'past submissions'.

Review questions – If you've entered the awards previously, make sure you review the questions carefully as there may be some changes to it. You can re-use generic information on your business in a subsequent submission, but remember that activities, strategies and outcomes need to relate to the relevant qualifying period – 1 July 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Brief your staff (if relevant) – explain why you're entering the Tourism Awards and what it entails. If yours is a large business, you may not be across everything from each department. In this case, it's important to involve the relevant staff early in the process.

2.3 Business Standards

Businesses entering the Tourism Awards must demonstrate that they meet minimum business standards relevant to their category. This can be demonstrated via relevant accreditation through the Quality Tourism Framework **OR** via a business standards pre-assessment within the online portal (to be completed prior to submitting your written entry).

Business Standards checklist

The below checklist is an indicative of the documents/information you will need to complete your Business Standards pre-assessment.

Insurance

- Copy of your Public Liability Insurance (PLI)
- Copy of workers compensation coverage (if applicable)
- Copy of other insurance policies (where applicable)

Compliance (LP&C)

- Copy of relevant licences and permits to operate
- Confirmation that the business has reliable and valid financial systems and meets all legal Australian Taxation Office business financial reporting requirements.

Business and Marketing Planning

- Short overview of your business
- A copy of your Business and Marketing Plan
 - If you do not have a Business and Marketing Plan, a template will be available for download.
 - Alternatively, you can opt to answer Business and Marketing questions
- Understanding of your product and target market
- Understanding of what online marketing is undertaken
- Understanding of what consumer review sites are used
- Continuous Improvements efforts over last 12 months
- Continuous Improvement plans in the next 12 months

Customer Service

- Copy of a Customer Service Procedures Manual
 - If you do not have a Customer Service Procedures Manual, a template will be available for download.
 - Alternatively, you can opt to answer Customer Service Procedures questions
- Understanding of how you cater to those with specific needs

Operating Systems

- Copy of an Operations Manual
 - If you do not have an Operations Manual, a template will be available for download.
 - Alternatively, you can opt to answer Business Operations questions
- Understanding of cleaning and maintenance procedures
- Understanding of any food handling processes (if applicable)
- Understanding of suppliers/contractors
- Understanding of equipment maintenance and handling and storage of chemicals (if applicable)

Risk Management

01. Copy of a Risk Management Plan
 - a. If you do not have a Risk Management Plan, a template will be available for download.
 - b. Alternatively, you can opt to answer Risk Management Plan questions

02. Understanding of emergency evacuation and management procedures
03. Understanding of First Aid kits and training

Environmental, Social & Cultural Responsibility

01. Commitment to reducing the environmental impact of your business
02. Copy of an Environmental Management Plan
 - a. If you do not have an Environmental Management Plan, a template will be available for download.
 - b. Alternatively, you can opt to answer Environmental Management questions
03. Understanding of your engagement with local indigenous groups

Resources

Wherever you see the blue information symbol after a question or business standard requirement, it means that there is more information available for this question – see marked in below.

Does your business have a Business and Marketing Plan?

	Yes	No
---	-----	----

Click on the icon to open a new pop-up. This will help you with further information on what the question requires and will give you resources to help you answer the question.

Frequently Asked Questions

My business is a Quality Tourism Accredited Business. Do I need to complete the Business Standards section?

No. If you are a current Quality Tourism Accredited Business, your business would already have demonstrated that you meet the minimum business standards required to enter the Tourism Awards. The portal will therefore automatically recognise your accreditation, so no further action is required.

My business is not a Quality Tourism Accredited Business. Do I need to complete the Business Standards section?

Yes. This is a national requirement, and you won't be able to submit your entry without having this section completed.

I am not sure if my business has a Quality Tourism Business Accreditation. How can I find out?

Please contact 02 9089 8889 or accreditation@nswtourismassociation.com.au

Do other States and Territories need to complete the Business Standards pre-assessment?

Yes, this is a requirement of the Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) and it applies to all States and Territories. However, some states have accreditation as a compulsory requirement

for all businesses entering the Tourism Awards, therefore, the Business Standards pre-assessment wouldn't apply to them.

How long will I take to complete the Business Standards pre-assessment?

It may take an entrant approx. 1-2 hours to complete this section – if the business has all licenses, insurance details and plans documented and easily accessible. More time would be required otherwise.

Do I need to complete the Business Standards pre-assessment for every nomination I have made?

No. You will only need to complete this once, irrespective of how many entries you are making.

I have previously entered the NSW Tourism Awards and completed the Business Standards preassessment then. Do I need to complete this again?

The portal will recognise your previous Business Standards pre-assessment, however, there may be some additional questions that you will need to complete for this year's Awards, as well as updating any information (e.g., licenses, plans, etc.) that has changed since.

Will the Business Standards section be judged/scored?

No, but it will be checked by the Program Manager or Accreditation Officer to ensure your business meets minimum business standards.

Will I receive confirmation once my Business Standards pre-assessment has been reviewed?

Entrants will only be contacted if more information is required or if any answers in this section need to be expanded.

What if I fail the Business Standards pre-assessment?

There is no pass or fail for the Business Standards. If your business does not meet the minimum standards required, the Program Manager will contact you with further information and support to get you to the level that it needs to be to enter the Tourism Awards. It is the businesses' responsibility to act on the changes required to meet the minimum standards.

Where can I find the Business Standards pre-assessment?

The Business Standards section will be available to you after your nomination has been approved.

Log-in to the Awards Portal and click on the GO TO link under your nomination. If entering multiple categories, choose one nomination for this process. Once you've submitted the Business Standards, other nominated categories will recognise it as completed.

Once you have selected 'GO TO' on your application from the home page, you will see the second tab where you can find the Business Standards section.

*Please note the below is an example only. Some categories will have a different question set.

Welcome to your 2024 Australian Tourism Awards Submission

You can use the tabs at the top of the page to navigate between the different components of your submission. You can work on all components at any time, however you would need to complete and submit your business standards first before the system will allow you to submit your Awards category component.

Business Standards

It is a requirement for this category to demonstrate adherence to business standards. This section is not judged nor contributes to your final score. It must be completed in order to finalise your submission, and will be reviewed by your program administrator for purposes of ensuring the standard is met, however it is not reviewed by the judging panel.

Please be aware of the following:

* Accredited establishments are not required to complete business standards. If you are accredited and seeing the business standards component, please check with your program administrator.

* If you have completed the business standards component in previous years, some of your responses should be pre-filled automatically with what has been supplied. However any files you have uploaded previously will not be transferred.

When completed, you will be one step closer to obtaining Quality Tourism Framework accreditation and use of the Quality Tourism Framework trademark if you wish to pursue. You can discuss with your program administrator the option of applying for official Quality Tourism Framework accreditation should you wish to do so.

Welcome



Once you have entered the Business Standards section, you will see all the sections that need to be completed under the Business Standards*. Select any that you want to start with.

ATIC AUSTRALIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY COUNCIL LIMITED AWARDS TEST ACT

Welcome 100% Business Standards 11% 01. Major Tourist Attractions 100%

Welcome Business Details Insurance LP&C Business & Marketing Customer Service Operating Systems Risk ES&CR ATDW

Business Standards.

It is a requirement for this category to demonstrate adherence to business standards. This section is not judged nor contributes to your final score. It must be completed in order to finalise your submission, and will be reviewed by your program administrator for purposes of ensuring the standard is met, however it is not reviewed by the judging panel.

Please be aware of the following:

* Accredited establishments are not required to complete business standards. If you are accredited and seeing the business standards component, please check with your program administrator.

* If you have completed the business standards component in previous years, some of your responses should be pre-filled automatically with what has been supplied. However any files you have uploaded previously will not be transferred.

When completed, you will be one step closer to obtaining Quality Tourism Framework accreditation and use of the Quality Tourism Framework trademark if you wish to pursue. You can discuss with your program administrator the option of applying for official Quality Tourism Framework accreditation should you wish to do so.

	Completed?	
Welcome	✓	100%
Business Details	✗	0%
Insurance	✗	0%
LP&C	✗	0%
Business & Marketing	✗	0%
Customer Service	✗	0%
Operating Systems	✗	0%
Risk	✗	0%
ES&CR	✗	0%
ATDW	✗	0%

As you make your way through the questions, you will notice that a green tick will appear next to each section. If a section has a red cross, then you have a mandatory question that has not been answered. You can continue to work and save your application, but you will not be able to submit until these questions have been answered. To identify which questions have not yet been answered, you can click on the 'Show Incomplete' option on the bottom of each page, to show you which ones have not yet been completed.

SECTION 3 DIGITAL REVIEW

A business's digital and online presence is a significant factor in their overall success and an important consumer touch point.

The online review accounts for 20 points. The judges will look at your website, social media and other external online sources' presence. It also takes into consideration your promotion of the broader region in which you operate.

Process

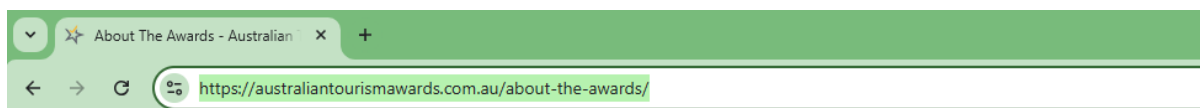
The Digital Review can be completed by the Verification Review judge, a member of the awards licensee staff, or an alternate judge.

The judge will undertake a review of the following:

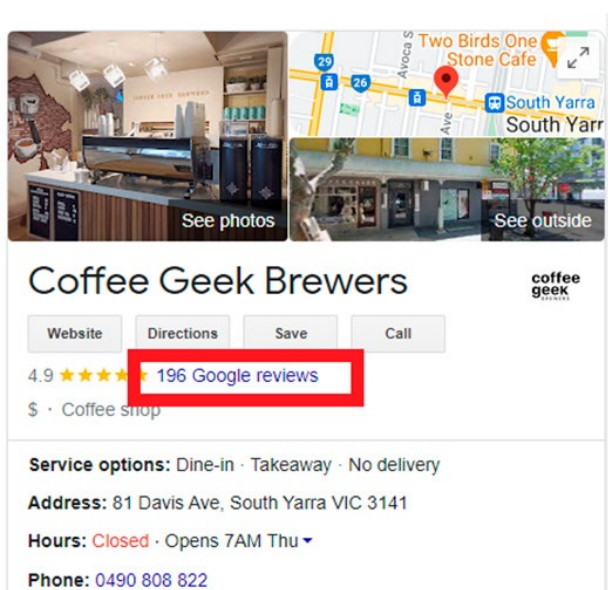
- The entrant's website
- The entrant's social media channels
- The entrant's search engine optimisation
- The entrant's external listing sources
- The entrant's engagement in the online review space

On nomination you are asked to supply any web/social media links you have. You can update this information at any time, especially if details have changed i.e., now listed on booking.com. Check all details are correct before submitting your entry. This is under 'details' in the portal.

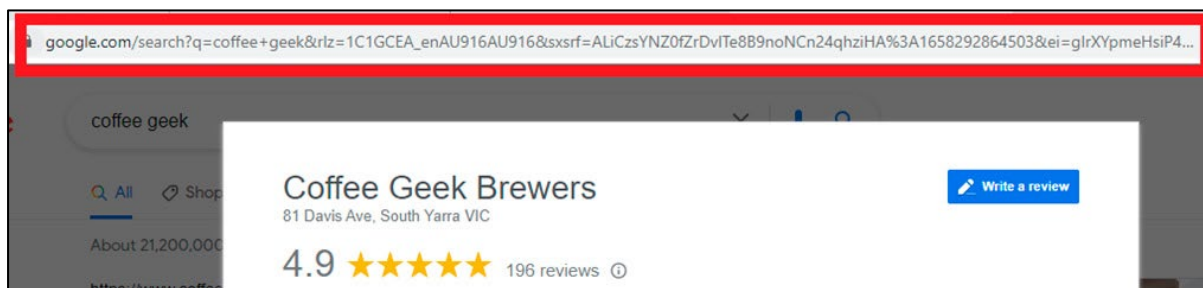
Note: Please ensure that you copy the full URL into these boxes (see the example below):



How to get the URL from your Google listing:



1. Google your business name
2. On the right-hand corner of the page, you should see the details of your business and a link that says 'Google reviews' (see marked in red on the right).
3. Click on this link
4. Your reviews will pop up – copy the URL (refer to the screenshot below)



4.1 Scoring

Most questions will be in a yes/no format, with the value of a 'yes' result outlined in the 'score' column. If a response receives a 'no' result then a score of 0 will be applied. In some instances, a scaled score is offered and parameters are outlined below.

The expected standard and a sliding scale (where applicable) are provided to assist in determining the scoring for each question.

The entrant is responsible for providing the correct link/s at each question to demonstrate they are meeting the expected standard.

Blank or incorrect links will attract a score of 0 at the judge's discretion.

What will be checked?

Question	URLs Required	Expectation	Max. Score
Website (9 available points)			
Does the website provide a clear overview of the product/service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homepage - FAQs - logos or awards/accreditation mentions 	Providing a clear overview of should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – clear communication of what the product/service is (0.5) – a selection of high-quality relevant images (0.5); – an FAQ page (0.5); – and logos i.e. QTAB, Star Ratings, Industry Membership, Tourism Awards etc. (0.5) 	2
Is there a clear call to action on the website?		There should be a book now button, detailed contact information, or booking enquiry information which is easy to find and clear.	1
Does the business' website communicate their	Entrant to provide (unlimited) links to	This does not have to be a dedicated page/section, but rather may appear throughout the site	1

sustainability/positive impact initiatives? 1 point	pages where this is referenced		
Is a Sustainability Plan/Climate Action Plan/Emissions Reduction Action Plan available via the website?	Entrant to provide link to page where this is available	A Sustainability Plan/Climate Action Plan/Emissions Reduction Action Plan/Impact Plan or similar is accessible via the entrant's website	1
Is there is a dedicated section/page within the website which promotes/explains the Accessibility of the product/service?	Entrant to provide link to page where this is communicated	There is a dedicated section/page within the website which promotes/explains the Accessibility of the product/service	1
Is an Accessibility Guide/AIAP/DAIP/Video available via the website?	Entrant to provide link to page where this is available	A specific Accessibility Guide/AIAP/DAIP/Video is accessible via the website	1
Is the website compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)?	Judges to download Google Lighthouse accessibility page checker. It's a good chrome plug in.	The website meets a minimum 70% on Google Lighthouse accessibility checker.	1
Is the website search engine optimised?		Entrant's own website should appear on the first page of Google if you search xxx (product type) xxx (region). If there are a high number of online booking agencies that fill the first page, then they should appear on the second page.	1
Does the website actively promote the entrant's region and encourage visitation?	Entrant to provide link to page where this is available	The website should have a dedicated section/page highlighting the local region as a visitor destination and include information on activities and/or places to stay within the region. Simply stating what region they are in is not sufficient, there should be clear information on the destination and/or complimentary products.	1
Social Media & Online Reviews (5 available points)			
Was the business actively engaged on social media throughout the qualifying period? This can include, but is not limited to, any one, or more of the following – Facebook, TripAdvisor, Instagram, twitter.	**Entrant must provide a link to ALL social channels to be included, in order of most frequently used channel to least.	The business regularly posts content to one or more social media channels. Averages may be used across the qualifying period, with scoring scaled according to frequency. Please review across the qualifying period as best you can, noting Facebook may show posts out of order due to engagement.	Less than monthly = 0 At least monthly = 0.5 At least fortnightly = 1

		Judges to review first listed channel and only progress through the list if required (i.e. if full points not reached or supporting info required.)	At least 3 per month =1.5 At least weekly =2
Do their social media pages actively promote the region and encourage visitation?		There are links/shares to relevant destination and complimentary product tourism sites/content on social media platforms across the qualifying period-	Less than quarterly = 0 At least quarterly =0.5 A least monthly = 1
Did the business regularly respond to their online reviews within the qualifying period?		The business responds to their online reviews. Review sites would include, but not be limited to TripAdvisor, Booking.com, Google. It is recommended that the Management response rate found in ReviewPro is used which provides a percentage, this then guides the score (right).	Responded to: Less than 10% = 0 10 - 25% = 0.5 25% - 50% = 1 50 - 75% = 1.5 75%+ =2
External online sources (6 available points)			
Is the business listed on ATDW?	Entrant to supply specific link to their <u>public</u> listing on ATDW	The ATDW listing should be current, clearly communicate what the product/service is, and display quality images. If a business cannot list on ATDW due to ineligibility, then N/A would apply and the full points for this question will be awarded. N/A can apply if it is a B2B product or service.	Listing = 1 Clear info and images = 1 additional point N/A = 2
Does the business have a Google Business Profile (also known as Google My Business)?	Entrant to supply specific link to their <u>public</u> Google listing	This needs to have been 'claimed' by the business to achieve a score. The listing should be current, clearly communicate what the product/service is, include images and opening hours.	Listing = 1 Clear info and images = 1 additional point N/A = 2
Can the entrant be found on at least two other online booking/listing sites?	Entrant to supply specific links to up to two <u>public</u> listing pages	There should be at least two other external sites that the business has a product listing on. This can include, but is not limited to; online booking sites,	None provided = 0

		destination pages, RTO and/or visitor centre websites. N/A can apply if it is a B2B product or service.	1 additional site = .5 2 additional sites = 1 N/A = 1
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SECTION 5 IMAGES

Submissions can include up to 30 images with captions (image allocation varies in few categories). Use them all!

Images are a great way to help judges understand exactly what you are trying to convey. However, you shouldn't rely on them to get your point across. A good rule of thumb is: 'if the images were removed, would the written submission still answer the question?'

In the [Comprehensive Answer Guide](#) you will find suggestions and ideas of what supporting images to use for each answer.

5.1 General tips

04. Use images to heighten your submission – do not leave judges guessing what you are trying to show them.
05. If you're on a slower internet connection and struggling to upload files, consider resizing them smaller before uploading. It is also normal for images to take longer to upload on the submission deadline day – this is because of the major traffic to the portal. If possible, upload your images before the deadline.
06. [Canva](#) is a great free tool that could assist you in creating infographics, collages, etc.
07. **Collages** are a great way to include more images whilst staying within the allocated image count. Just make sure they are clear, and don't use too many images in one collage.
08. **Graphs & Charts** – pie charts, line graphs, flow charts etc., are an effective way of displaying information such as the origin of markets, results from marketing campaigns or customer feedback results. They do form part of the 30 supporting images.
09. Avoid using too many **screenshots** and ensure that the text within these is legible and can be read.

5.2 Rules

10. Both .JPG and .PNG are allowed.
11. Uploads cannot be larger than 10MB. If uploading multiple files at the same time, a collective 10MB limit will apply.
12. Your 30 images allowance does not include the images under *Media and Promotional*.
13. Images can be infographics, charts, graphs, photographs and collages.
14. It is crucial that all images are clear and legible.
15. Use images that have high resolution – ensure they are not pixelated.
16. The way you see/view images in the portal will be the same for the judges – remember; judges are reading and scoring submissions through the portal. If the image is not clear for you, or if you can't read the content within the image, the judges won't either.
17. Make sure all images are relevant to the submission, and to each of the questions they are under.
18. Any image used must be for the sole purpose of supporting the submission by providing evidence.
19. Images cannot be used to form part of the written response to a question. For example, you may include charts or graphs as an image, but if the data are not explained within the written submission, then the image will not contribute to the score.
20. You don't need to repeat all the information/data that is in the chart, but your written answer needs to refer to it and explain what that means.
21. **Testimonials:** It's up to each entrant to decide how they use testimonials, e.g., it can be provided within the submission word by word or only outline the key highlights of the testimonial and attach the full text as an image to support the answer.
22. Testimonials within the submission will be included in the word count.
23. There is no limit to how many testimonials can be used, and/or how long they need to be. However, it should be within reason and the discretion of the entrant.
24. If you choose to have a testimonial as an image, ensure that the written content of the image is clear and legible.
25. **Captions** – when uploading your images into the portal, you need to give them a ten-word caption.
26. You can also consider using the finalised captions as part of the image file name, e.g., 01 'Our location in the beautiful King Valley'.
27. If captions exceed 10 words, it will be included in the word count.
28. Content within images (e.g., data within charts and infographics) is not included in the word count. It is however important that these are legible and are only used to support the written answer.

5.3 Examples

Naming Images

When you upload your images please make sure they are named something that will make sense to the judges and the program administrators. You have up to 10 words to describe the image - use them wisely

Bad Example

- bathroom-558713664.jpg
- 89839874THG.png
- Image329_1.jpg



Good Example

- The view of Wine Glass Bay seen on our walking tour
- View of the vineyard from Cellar Door



YOUR IMAGES ARE DOWNLOADED BY THE AWARDS TEAM - MAKE IT EASY FOR THEM TO KNOW WHAT IMAGE IS WHICH

Use images to show location and or key details

In this case we are trying to show the location of the business. It is wise to give a little details so judges can have context. For location – it is great to have a scape of remoteness and distance from closest city/town.



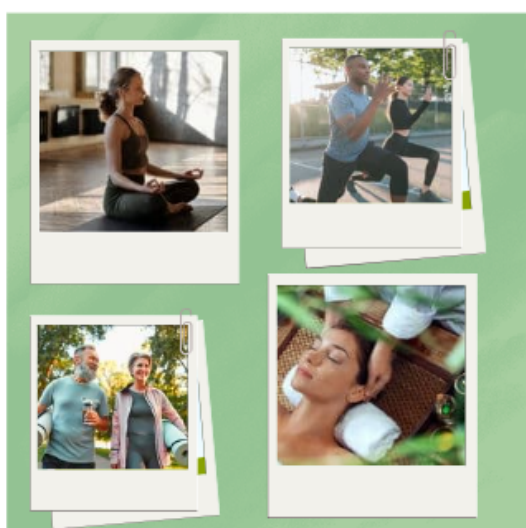
Bad Example ❌

Refer to images for location map

Good Example ✅

We are located on Kangaroo Island, which is under 4 hours south of Adelaide. Guest can travel by car, with a short ferry ride from Cape Jarvis.

You can use images to showcase new products and initiatives



Bad Example ❌

In the qualifying period we introduced a new wellness retreat.

Good Example ✅

In the qualifying period we introduced a new wellness retreat. The wellness retreat had a range of activities available including Yoga, Pilates, Meditation and Massage.

Demonstrating a strategy/process/procedure



BAD example ❌

We have developed a people management strategy to manage our staff

GOOD example ✅

We have a people management strategy that has been developed to ensure we can deliver high levels of customer service. This strategy entails the following key elements:



YOU CAN CREATE A TABLE WITHIN THE WRITTEN SUBMISSION USING THE TOOLBAR

Attract	Create positions that attract enthusiastic, driven staff.
Educate	Provide ongoing education on the organisation and professional development opportunities.
Train	Provide regular training to ensure staff are kept up to date on business activities
Motivate	Develop a workplace culture that recognises staff achievements and good working practices
Empower	Delegate responsibilities and actively encourage staff to provide feedback to improve products and systems.
Reward	Ensure basic salaries and competitive. Develop reward system for staff meeting KPI's



Please note: content within tables is included in the word count

Using testimonials to support your entry

Testimonials should be included in your word count. Use images to demonstrate the array of testimonials received, but be specific in the written submission of key outcomes/responses.

Bad Example ❌

We have received many positive reviews to our business. Refer to attached image.

Good Example ✅

We consistently receive positive feedback for our business and as a result we have a GRI score of 98%. Some of our feedback highlights are: 'Fantastic experience for the whole family', 'Went above and beyond to provide a memorial experience', 'We can see why they have won so many awards – an unforgettable stay'. We have included an image to demonstrate the range of positive feedback received.



Collages are a great way to showcase a range of products/activities

***If you can do them well

There is nothing wrong with using a collage to show a log in a little space. The only problem is if you use too many images or bad quality/small images as they can turn out fuzzy and hard to see, which ends up pointless to the process.



- Use high re images – the higher the res, the clearer the image. Try to use a minimum of 72dpi.
- Don't be afraid to get creative! Overlap, use a background, different sizes – it can be fun!
- There are plenty of FREE online tools that can help you – just google 'make a collage'.
- If you can't the image clearly after you download – chances are the judges wont either. You may need to redesign.

Bad Example ❌



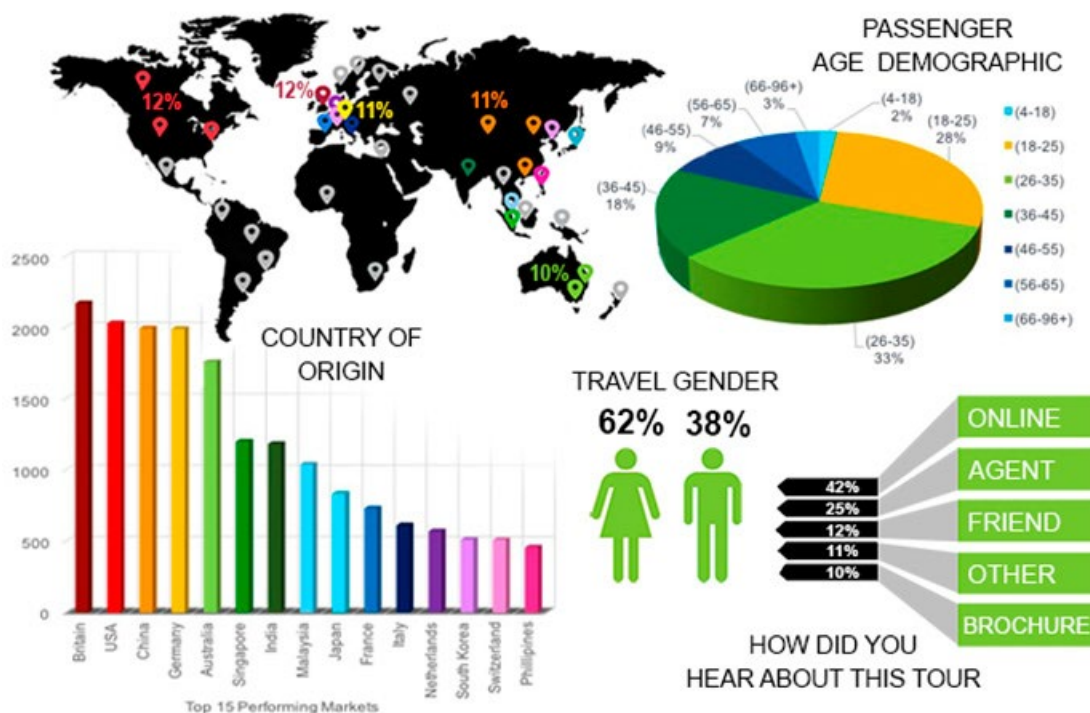
- Low quality images
- Small pictures
- Over lapped onto a larger image
- Colours are overwhelming

Good Example ✓

- Clear, high quality images.
- Created using a free template
- Easy to view



Infographics



Please note: the images used above are for demonstration purposes only and are not taken from any existing awards submission. The above are not high-resolution but please ensure that you only use high-resolution images and graphs for your submission.

Image credit to Tourism Australia for background image in location map. All other images have been sourced through Shutterstock under license. Images are not to be reused.

5.4 How to upload images

Images are included through a file upload function and viewed using the gallery.

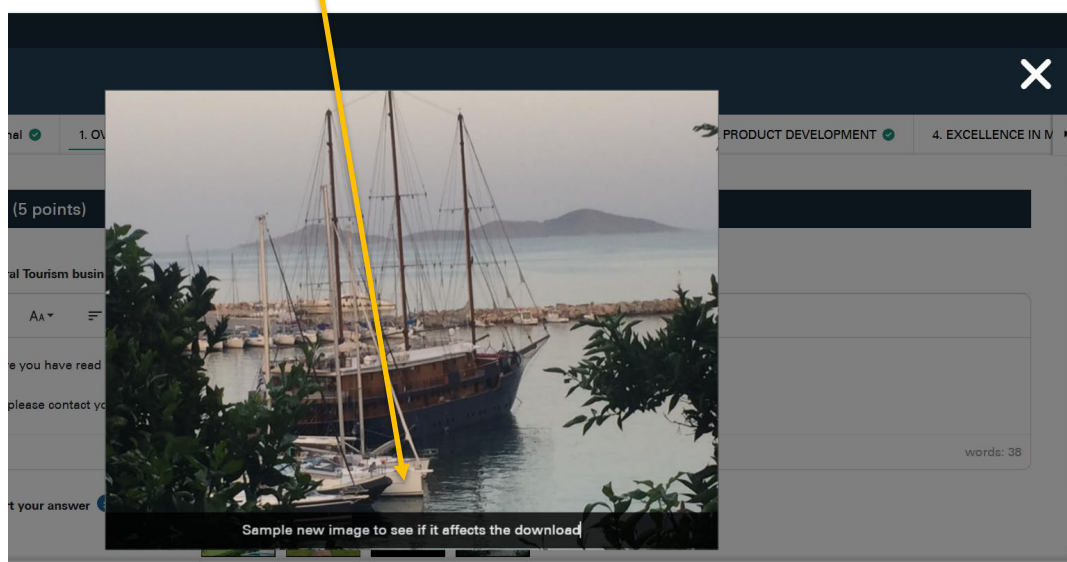
To add images follow these instructions:

- Click on the + Image button in the corresponding question.

B. Provide visual evidence to support your answer

[+ Add Image](#)

- Select the image you want to upload, then click on Open.
- The image will display across the page.
- Add the title in the space provided – limit 10 words.



- A thumbnail of image will display. To add additional images repeat the process.



SECTION 6. COMPREHENSIVE ANSWER GUIDE

6.1 Introduction

Used alongside the Response Guidance in the questions for your category, this guide will help you craft a compelling and comprehensive Tourism Awards submission. Breaking down each section provides clear direction on how to address the questions effectively while showcasing the unique strengths of your business.

Approaching your submission strategically is key to success. The Comprehensive Answer Guide will help you structure your answers and encourage you to highlight measurable outcomes, integrate brand personality, and connect your achievements to the broader tourism industry.

While the suggestions are adaptable to your business, this guide emphasises clarity, focus, and alignment with the judging criteria. With practical examples and formatting tips, it aims to simplify the process and inspire confidence as you develop your entry.

6.2 Essential Tips Before Getting Started

Qualifying Period

Only include activities implemented during the qualifying period, from **1 July to 31 March**, except in Q1.1 (Overview of Business), where you can discuss your business more broadly.

Offline Drafts

It is standard practice to draft your submission in Word or Google Docs first, then copy it into the Awards Portal once complete.

There are a few things to keep in mind if you do this.

- It's essential to know that as the portal is a web-based document, it will count all the symbols you have used, e.g. &, - and *, where Word or Google Docs do not.
- The word count tally in the portal is the number that will be used for judging and auditing purposes, so please consider this when drafting your response. Allow time to edit your submission to the word limit once it's pasted into the Awards Portal.

- Any formatting from a Word or Google doc, will change once pasted into the Awards Portal. Wait until you paste your submission in the Awards Portal to perfect the formatting.
- Rather than uploading the entire completed submission at once, upload your draft to the Awards Portal as you complete each question so you can become familiar with formatting in the Awards Portal.
- Copying and pasting tables have limitations in terms of transferring formatting and colours. We do not recommend copying and pasting from Excel or from Word. Google Docs is the most compatible but even then background text colour and table cell colours are never retained. Copy and paste when the table is simple and then edit in the Awards Portal. Copying and pasting is restricted for security reasons as some of the formatting may contain JavaScript or malicious links.
- Allow time to edit and format your draft from a Word or Google Doc to the Awards Portal.
- Aim to have your completed final document uploaded at least a week before the deadline to give yourself time to review and proofread in the portal and adjust any formatting.

Reading the Questions

There is often more than one part to a question, so carefully read each to ensure you address all parts. Missing components will result in lost points.

Tone and Style

A Tourism Awards submission is narrating your story in a compelling way that captures the judges' attention while providing evidence of why your business is worthy of an award.

As well as telling the judges why your business is unique and an industry leader, you must include relevant, factual information backing up your claims. In summary, a balance of 'sizzle' and 'substance' is required.

- Decide on either **first person** (e.g., "We pride ourselves...") or **third person** (e.g., "AAA Hotel prides itself...") and maintain this style throughout. The entry will feel more personable if written in the first person, even if someone else is writing it for you.
- Introduce your **brand personality** early and ensure it is reflected consistently.
- Link your **core values, mission, and vision** throughout your responses.

AI Assistance

AI programs like ChatGPT can help you draft your entry by refining language and structure. However, be mindful that they may alter tone and lack the ability to generate key insights specific to your business. Therefore, AI should be used as a preliminary tool or for fine-tuning your submission rather than as a substitute for your expertise and strategic input.

Word Count Tips

- Submissions can include up to 5,000 (Accessible Tourism category is Max 2,000 words).
- Consider a word count based on the number of points each question is worth. For example, a 13-point question warrants more words than a 3-point question.
- Word count includes text in tables but excludes the question prompts.
- It's normal for first drafts to exceed the limit. Be prepared to cut redundant words while keeping your submission concise and impactful.
- As outlined above, be mindful if drafting in Word or Google Docs as they do not count symbols, e.g., &, but the Awards Portal counts these as individual words. If you are drafting your submission outside of the Awards Portal it is essential to regularly copy and paste your entry into the Awards Portal to keep track of the word limit.
 - HINT: If you are getting close to the word limit in Word or Google Docs, copy and paste to the Awards Portal to check your word limit.
- Be aware of rules relating to the use of symbols. If a business purposely combines words using no spaces or a symbol (e.g. &, -, /), up to 5 points can be deducted from the total score. Using hyphens where appropriate or commonly used will be accepted, e.g., in e-commerce, year-on-year.

Acronyms

Use acronyms; however, remember to introduce the abbreviation and write it in full the first time it appears; then only use the acronym ongoing, e.g., Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC).

Grammarly & Proofreading

Utilise Grammarly (a free app) to help you with grammar, tone, clarity, capital letters, and consistency throughout the submission.

Having a few different people proofread and give feedback on the submission is very valuable.

The online system has a spellchecker to help pick up any last-minute errors.

Tourism Focus

Throughout your submission, highlight how and why your business contributes to the tourism industry. This is particularly important for nominees who operate in multiple industry sectors, such as restaurants and business events.

Tables

Where there is a text box response (e.g., Q1.1.A), you can use tables to make information easier to digest and visually appealing. Always precede tables with an introductory sentence explaining what they show. Avoid repeating table content in narrative paragraphs.

Often the formatting in word or google docs changes when pasted into the Awards Portal. To ensure the tables are formatted to your liking, format the tables in the Awards Portal, not a word or google doc.

Supporting Evidence (Images/Infographics)

Each question asks for supporting evidence, which is your opportunity to use images/infographics to bring your submission to life and provide evidence of your written answers.

You are only allowed a maximum of 30 pieces of supporting evidence (images/infographics) across the whole submission. Therefore, it's important to plan these as you go to decide how to distribute them best.

Canva (a free design app) is an excellent tool for this. Ensure you use all opportunities to add supporting evidence when requested; images, graphics and testimonials are a great way to display information and substantiate your claims.

Do not use images to try to cut down on word count. Images are used to support the written word, not to replace them.

In the Comprehensive Answer Guide below, you will find suggestions for supporting evidence for each answer. Please refer to the [image section](#) in this guide for image rules.

- ✓ Plan supporting evidence/images as you go and mark their intended locations in your draft (e.g., "Image #1: Infographic with a hero image, logo, map").
- ✓ Create a folder with numbered images for easy upload.
- ✓ Ensure visuals support your answers rather than forming part of them.

Top Tips for Images

- **Be strategic:** Use images or infographics that directly relate to the key points in your written response. Image cannot stand alone.
- **Use high-quality visuals:** Images should be clear, high resolution, professional, and visually engaging.
- **Provide context:** Add concise descriptions (up to 10 words) for each image, explaining its relevance.
- **Showcase your brand:** Make sure your brand identity shines through in your visuals.

Testimonials

Use testimonials from customers, industry, trade, tourism organisations, local councils, or staff to add credibility. Ensure they directly support your answers and are relevant to the question being addressed. Ensure you write the key parts of any testimonials into the copy as an excerpt, and then the full testimonial can be included as supporting evidence.

Make sure you give anyone you might be seeking a testimonial enough time to prepare it and provide them with the question, so they know the context and focus of their testimonial.

Goals v Strategies v Tactics

It is not uncommon for businesses to confuse goals, strategies and tactics (activities/actions), so it's critical to understand the difference before you start. Here is an example of an answer in a table showing their differences.

Goals/Objectives - What do you want to achieve?

Strategies - How are you going to achieve it?

Tactics - Actions/activities (to-do's) you must complete to achieve the goal.

Outcomes - What was the benefit of these activities? Make them quantifiable where possible.

GOAL	STRATEGY	TACTICS	OUTCOMES
Increase direct bookings on our website by 20% YOY from 15% to 35% by developing a new website in 20XX.	Develop and launch a new user-friendly, on-brand and optimised website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website survey completed and results analysed. - Create a launch strategy and update marketing budget. - Research other websites and create brief. - Engage web developers. - Engage SEO company to optimise content pre-launch. - Feedback survey once site is live. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct bookings increase by 24% YOY from 15% to 39%. - New website traffic increased YOY by 126% compared to the old site. - Time on site increased by 68% to 2.13 minutes. - Annual occupancy increased from 71% to 89%. - Guest survey showed website user experience rated 5/5. - Increased revenue by 15% YOY. - Ranking on page one for 8/10 key search phrases.

Can It Be Measured?

When stating goals and/or strategies, ensure they are measurable and directly related to the outcome.

Important Don'ts

- **Don't assume local knowledge:** Judges may not know your region or business, especially at the National Awards level. Write for an interstate audience—explain key terms, locations, and their significance (i.e., describe "The Coorong" and its proximity to Adelaide).
- **Don't refer judges to other answers:** Each answer must stand alone. Avoid phrases like "as discussed earlier" or "see Q3.1."
- **Don't duplicate content:** Tailor responses to the specific question. If topics overlap, reframe the information to suit the context.
- **Entering more than one category:** Although some sections may be similar, ensure that the entries are tailored to the specific category and relevant questions.

6.3 Using the Comprehensive Answer Guide

The below Comprehensive Answer Guide offers suggestions and ideas to help craft your answers. However, not all recommendations will be relevant to your business, so tailor your responses to suit your unique circumstances.

Suggestions on layout and formatting are for guidance only. Choose the approaches that best suit your business. Remember that judges review multiple entries, so it's crucial to present information in a clear, digestible format.

To avoid feeling overwhelmed, read the guide thoroughly before starting and then work through each section step by step as you write. Remember, these are simply suggestions—you're not expected to include everything listed.

As you plan your submission, you may realise certain plans or processes aren't yet in place for your business. Don't be discouraged! The Tourism Awards process is an opportunity to pause, reflect, and improve. Use this as a chance to implement what's missing and strengthen your business for the future.

Good luck!

6.4 Overview of Business

Question 1.1

5 points

- A. Provide an overview of the business.
- B. Provide visual evidence to support your answer.

Response Guidance

Provide a clear and concise description of the business and the product/service/visitor experience it provides.

Include the vision and the values of the business to help set the scene for later questions.

Assume the judge has no prior knowledge of the business so take them on a journey of how and when it began, where the business is located or where the services are provided, who works in the business etc.

Highlight the business's points of difference and what makes it stand out from others. Consider the amenities, products, services, or facilities that enhance visitor satisfaction.

Clearly demonstrate your eligibility by aligning with the category criteria to ensure that there is no misunderstanding as to why you have entered this category. The judges (and auditors) need to understand how the business fits into the category; therefore, be sure to include a clear explanation.

The judges may not be familiar with the business – your submission may be judged nationally and could have judges that are not from your state/territory. Therefore, explain everything from the ground up.

Understanding Question 1.1.

This answer is your opportunity to grab the judges' attention and immerse them in the story of your business. A well-crafted overview serves as the gateway to your submission—it should inspire, excite, and set the stage for everything that follows. Use this section to share the unique story of your business, highlight your passion, vision, and values, and leave a lasting first impression.

Look to your website for inspiration. Your Home or About Us pages may already contain the foundation for this section. Trade or media blurbs or brand identity can also be excellent starting points.

Remember, **this is the only section where you can discuss the history of your business.** After this question, you'll focus solely on achievements within the qualifying period.

What Judges Are Looking For

- A compelling, passionate, well-structured narrative that introduces your business and captures its essence.
- A clear depiction of your history, evolution, and the unique qualities that set you apart from others.
- Clearly understand your products, experiences and services and what makes them distinctive and memorable for your visitors.
- It's important to demonstrate how your business aligns with the category you've entered. For instance, if you're entering the Hosted Accommodation category, specify that your business provides "hosted accommodation" rather than just "accommodation."

Tips for Crafting Your Answer

- **Keep it chronological:** Start from the beginning and take the reader through your journey. Avoid jumping around.
- **Use creative subheadings:** Help the narrative flow by breaking it into engaging, on-brand sections, such as:
 - *A Passion Turned Purpose (instead of History)*
 - *The Essence of Zen Retreat (instead of About Us)*
 - *The Team Behind the Magic (instead of Staff)*
 - *Celebrating Success (instead of Awards and Recognition)*
- **Focus on storytelling:** Engage the judges with a narrative that reflects your personality and passion.
- **Balance detail with brevity:** Cover all critical points but keep your answers concise and impactful.

Suggested approach and examples

Start Strong with a Wow Factor!

- Your opening paragraph is your elevator pitch. Your unique selling proposition. Capture the judges' attention with an exciting and dynamic introduction that succinctly explains the **who, where, what, and why**. Aim to spark curiosity and make them want to read on.

EXAMPLE

Since 2015, Eco Explorer Tours has been crafting unforgettable journeys that immerse travellers in the raw beauty of regional Victoria. Our multi-day hiking adventures go beyond the ordinary—leading explorers through breathtaking landscapes where rugged coastlines meet ancient forests and native wildlife thrives in its natural habitat. More than just a walk in nature, our 3–8 day tours blend adventure with culture, featuring locally sourced cuisine and the deep knowledge of our passionate guides. Departing Melbourne year-round, each journey is a chance to disconnect from the everyday and reconnect with the wild, leaving footprints only in memories.

Nature and History of Your Business

- Share the essence of your business and its journey, covering:
 - **What your business does and why:** What is your core offering, and what inspired you to create it?
 - **Location:** Weave your location and areas of operation into your introduction, relating them to your nearest capital city. Include a map in Q1.1.A as a supporting visual, showing your location relative to the city, state, and Australia.
 - **History and evolution:** Explain when and why your business was established, as well as key milestones, expansions, renovations, or rebrands.
 - **Ownership:** Describe your ownership structure (e.g. family-owned, board-governed).
 - **Team:** Mention precisely how many people work in the business, their roles, and how many full-time staff members are equivalent. Also include permanent contractors. If it is a large organisation, an infographic of a business structure in Q1.1.B will help to give a visual representation.

EXAMPLE

Joining my husband John and I as the two Managing Directors, in May 2022, a full-time Front Office Manager joined the team, and in June 2023, a part-time Housekeeping Supervisor. We also have two full-time and four casual receptionists, as well as six casual housekeepers. Our team consists of seven equivalent full-time staff (EFT), and our 97% staff rating on TripAdvisor reinforces our commitment to providing stellar customer service to our guests.

Products and Experiences

- Paint a clear picture of the tourism products, experiences, and services you offer visitors. Refer to your website and break down your offerings in this answer as you do there. For example, if you provide Hop-On, Hop-Off passes, Small Group Tours and Private Tours on your website, follow this structure.
- Use headings, bullet points, or tables to present information concisely, including:
 - **Unique selling points:** What sets you apart? For instance, are you the only operator providing a particular experience in your state or Australia?
 - **Competitors:** What makes you different from your competitors? Consider size, location, exclusivity, services, and facilities.
 - **Benefits to your customers:** How do your offerings enhance their experience?
 - **Partnerships and collaborations:** Do you work with other tourism businesses to add value to your products?
 - **Pricing structure:** Are there different prices for adults, children, concession holders, packages, memberships, etc? You might include an infographic image in Q1.1.B that reflects your pricing structure.
 - **Showcase a broad range of experiences:** Experiences or products could include wildlife experiences, corporate packages, groups and charters, functions, accommodation, conservation, etc.



- **What services do you offer?** Services for accommodation experiences might include free Wi-Fi, airport transfers, 24-hour reservations, valet parking, kids staying and eating free, fit balls/yoga mats, etc. Services for a function and events venue could include a personal event planner, wedding handbook, photographer, etc.
- A table like the one below can be a good way to break down your products, experiences and services.

EXPERIENCES/PRODUCTS	SERVICES
Small Group Adventures	
Tours are capped at 20 people, ensuring an intimate and high-quality experience.	Over 30 pick-up locations in CBD, St Kilda and Greater Melbourne
Chef's Table Degustation	
Be entertained by our talented chefs as you watch them create, then feast on a mouthwatering 6-course degustation matched with wines.	Bookings for up to eight people Adult-only restaurant Only serving regional produce
Versatility & Amenities	
Only self-contained accommodation in the region with an outdoor bath, golf green, and tennis court and one of only two self-contained properties with a pizza oven.	The property can be configured to suit guest needs; book one cabin for a couples retreat or the whole property for family or friends to spread out.

Vision, Values, and Recognition

- Share your passion and purpose—why do you do what you do? Judges want to understand your vision, mission and values and how they shape your business and visitor experience.
- This is also a good place to highlight any awards, accreditations, or significant achievements throughout your history.

EXAMPLE

Our mission is to 'provide a personalised travel experience where guests leave feeling connected to nature, beautiful spaces and our local region.' This is guided by values of excellence, belonging, community and beauty. This dedication has earned us extensive national and international media coverage, 97.5% five-star Google reviews and Gold at the Victorian Tourism Awards in 2023.

Supporting Evidence

Response Guidance

This is where you can include images to support your answer in Q1.1.A. Examples of the type of evidence you can include are:

- *Images of staff, services, experiences, buildings, room types etc.*
- *Map of location of business, route etc.*

This is an opportunity to show each of the products or services that are on offer.

Do not include any documents (plans, procedures, policies etc.).

Question 1.1.B lets you visually showcase your business, reinforcing the key points in your written overview (Q1.1.A). Think of it as an opportunity to bring your story to life through high-quality, engaging visuals highlighting your offerings, development, brand identity, and team.

Supporting Evidence and Images

- **Hero image and logo:** Design what might look like a cover page featuring a striking hero image of your business, your logo, and your location. You can also include accreditation and awards logos.
- **Map:** Design a custom map showing your location in your region and in relation to your closest city, state, and the rest of Australia.
- **Historical timeline:** If your business has a long and interesting history, create a visually engaging timeline with images. Highlight significant milestones, such as expansions, diversifications, or recognitions, to tell your story.
- **Vision, mission, and values:** Create an infographic that displays your business's core values, mission, and vision.
- **Product or experience collage:** Design a collage showcasing your key products, services, or visitor experiences. Pull images from your brochure or website to give a cohesive look.
- **Facilities and services:** Create a collage or series of images that highlight your facilities (e.g., dining areas, accommodation, visitor experiences) and services, demonstrating the range and quality of your offerings.
- **Meet the team;** Include an image showing your happy team.
- **Testimonials:** Feature a testimonial from a partner organisation or customer that backs up any claims made in Q1.1.A. Note that you should include key highlights or sentences of the testimonial in Q1.1.A, and in Q1.1.B, you could provide a screenshot as evidence of where the testimonial came from.

- **Industry recognition:** Include an image of a testimonial or letter from an industry professional or organisation discussing your business's contributions to the industry or region.
- **Awards and accreditations:** Showcase a visual compilation of all your award and accreditation logos to establish credibility and highlight your achievements. Remember, these can be over the whole history of your business.
- **Pricing and packages:** Design an infographic outlining your pricing structure and package offerings. Ensure the design is clear and engaging for judges.
- **Organisation chart:** Present a well-designed organisation chart showing your business structure and team roles. Emphasise how your team works together to achieve success. If the team is small, it can also include images.

Accreditation and Award logos example



Pricing structure example

TICKETS

ANNUAL PASSES


GIFT CARDS

	0-3 years	4-12 years	13+ years
Park Entry + 1 Single Ride	\$5.00	\$15.00	\$15.00
Additional Single Rides	\$5.00	\$10.50	\$11.50
Park Entry + Unlimited Rides	\$18.00	\$41.50	\$61.50

All guests require a Park Entry or Unlimited Rides ticket to enter

BUY TICKETS


TICKET INFORMATION



SHOTOVER & NOMAD SAFARI COMBO

Why settle for one when you can have both? An action filled 3-hour tour both on and in the water!

[FIND OUT MORE](#)




FAMILY PASS ONLY \$355*

Get the whole family on Shotover Jet for an epic \$355!

*Book two adults and two children

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

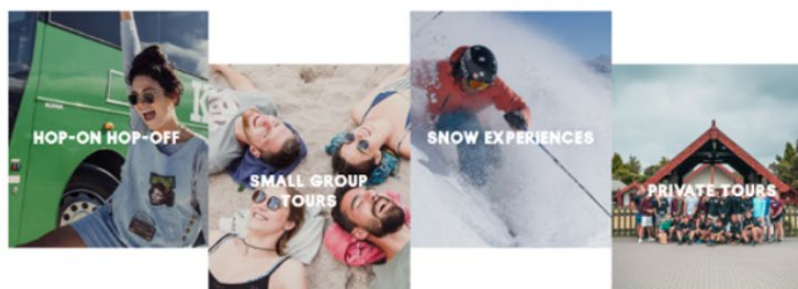


SWING + JET COMBO

Ready for a day of ultimate canyon action? Then do we have the combo for you!

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Breakdown of product themes example



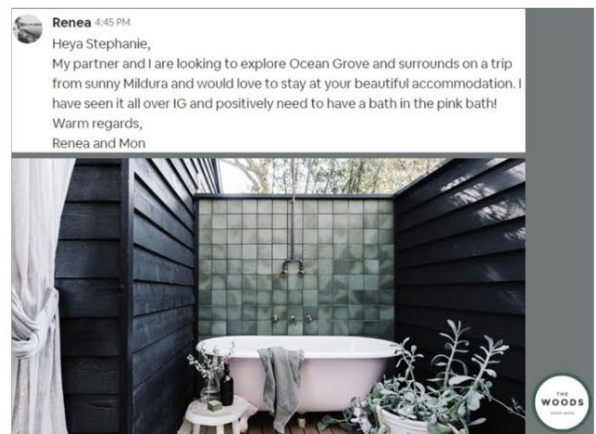
Showcasing family history example



A great example of a collage showcasing some of the properties' experiences.



A custom-made map clearly showing the location in the region, state and Australia.



Screenshot backing up a claim in Q1.1 that people book to experience the Insta-famous bath.



Organisation chart with team images

6.5 Excellence in Business & Product Development

Question 2.1

10 points

- A. What improvements have been made to develop business operations and/or the product offering during the qualifying period?
- B. Provide visual evidence to support your answer.

Provide a short overview of the business's approach towards developing its business operations and/or product offering.

EXAMPLE

Improvement 1:

What specific improvements has the business implemented in its operations and/or the product offering during the qualifying period? Keep this response to one sentence, providing a basic introduction only.

Describe the Improvement:

Provide further detail on the improvement.

Rationale:

What were the reasons for implementing this improvement?

Specific Goals:

What specific goals did the business aim to achieve with this improvement?

Outcomes:

What were the measurable results of these changes?

NOTE: North Coast Regional Tourism Award entrants only need to provide 1 – 2 examples

Ensure you enter NA in the subsequent boxes, which enables you to submit your entry.

Response Guidance

Provide between 3–5 examples.

The response to this question can include examples relating to:

- *Business operations*
- *Product development*

(?) Business Operations

"Business operations" generally refers to the day-to-day activities involved in running a business. This can include but is not limited to managing resources, processes, and people to achieve organisational goals.

Some examples of improvements include;

- *Operations (inventory management, compliance and safety, risk management, trade distribution etc.)*
- *Finance (systems, investment, pricing strategy etc.)*
- *Human resources (training, reward, recognition, professional development, attracting staff etc.)*
- *Business capability or learning initiatives (e.g. completion of Quality Tourism programs including risk management, online distribution etc.)*

(?) Product Development

"Product offering" generally refers to the products, services and experiences a company offers its customers.

Some examples of improvements include;

- *Technology (developed a mobile app to improve the experience, introduced AI chatbots to assist in visitor enquiries etc.)*
- *Product packaging (value added to the experience with other local products/experiences etc.)*
- *Facilities (upgraded or introduced new facilities e.g. pool, vehicle, tasting room etc.)*
- *Experiences (upgraded or introduced new experiences e.g. tour, gastronomic tasting session, wine tasting, meet the keeper, spa/wellbeing etc.)*

Note: this is not a complete list but does provide some examples for consideration.

(?) Rationale

Provide the judge with a clear understanding why the improvement was made.

Some examples on the rationale for the improvement could be:

- *Business Operations*
 - *Reduce business expenses*
 - *Streamline processes*
 - *Other strategic objectives*
- *Product Development*
 - *Driven by feedback*
 - *Reaching new markets*
 - *Advancing technologies*
- *Other strategic objectives*

Note: this is not a complete list but does provide some examples for consideration.

Consider how the improvement aligns with the vision or values of the business as identified in Q1.

(?) Specific Goals

Provide the judge with the specific goals that the business aimed to achieve with the improvement.

Some examples of specific goals could be:

- *Reduce manual effort by 15%*
- *Improve workflow efficiency by 30%.*

(?) Outcomes

What were the measurable results of these changes?

Provide measurable results that demonstrate to the judge the outcomes of the improvement.

Consider what learnings were made during this process, particularly if intended outcomes were not achieved.

Understanding Question 2.1

This question is your opportunity to demonstrate how strategic planning drives innovation and continuous improvement in your business.

Start your response with a concise overview of your business planning and development approach. Emphasise how your philosophy fosters growth and ensures sustainability through proactive, data-informed decision-making.

Then, showcase at least three, preferably five, of the key innovations and/or improvements you made in your business in the qualifying period. If you are struggling to decide which ones to include, choose the ones with the best measured outcomes and that you are most proud of.

This response is not just about listing improvements; it's about storytelling. Use each innovation to weave a narrative of growth and intentionality. By linking your improvements to your business's goals and demonstrating clear outcomes, you'll show the judges how your business is evolving to meet challenges, delight customers, and contribute to the broader tourism industry.

What Judges Are Looking For

- This answer allows you to show the judges how you are strategic in your business planning.
- Evidence of well-thought-out initiatives that align with your business goals.
- Measurable outcomes.
- Commitment to delivering exceptional visitor experiences.

Tips for Crafting Your Answer

1. **Structure your response:** Clearly outline your goals, the strategies used to achieve them, the rationale behind each initiative, and the measurable outcomes.
2. **Hold a brainstorming session:** Start by brainstorming your most impactful innovations or improvements during the qualifying period, of which you can show positive measured results. Consider the following categories:
 - a. **Product development:** Launching new experiences, services, or products.
 - b. **Technology:** Adopting new booking systems, apps, or digital tools.
 - c. **Operations:** Streamlining processes or introducing new management systems.
 - d. **Staff development:** Training or wellbeing programs, professional development.
 - e. **Physical upgrades:** Renovations, new furnishings, or vehicles.
 - f. **Accessibility:** Enhancements that ensure inclusivity for visitors. (Note - there is a question that focuses on accessibility later, so consider which question this improvement or innovation is best suited to so you don't duplicate information).
 - g. **Sustainability:** Green programs or initiatives. (Note – a question also focuses on sustainability later, so consider where these initiatives are best suited).

3. **Connect to financial viability:** It would be beneficial if at least one initiative addressed financial performance and demonstrated sustainability and viability. To illustrate results, you can use percentage changes rather than exact figures.

Suggested Approach and Examples

Overview

Provide a short overview of the businesses approach towards developing its business operations and/or product offering.

1. Complete the short overview introducing your philosophy and approach to business planning and continuous improvement.
2. Consider the following areas:
 - a. **Business planning:** Highlight your planning and development processes, including tools and strategies such as SWOT analysis, competitor analysis, risk management, or financial planning.
 - b. **Collaborative planning:** Explain who participates in business planning, how often, and how goals are tracked through regular management or team meetings.
 - c. **Proactive management:** Showcase how you anticipate challenges and make data-driven decisions rather than reacting to circumstances.
 - d. **Guest-centric goals:** Illustrate how your improvements ultimately enhance visitor experiences.
 - e. **Monitoring success:** Share how you track and evaluate the success of improvements and innovations through feedback, KPIs, and alignment with your core values.

Question Fields

- Complete the question fields, highlighting the best improvements and innovations made during the qualifying period.
- Consider the following:
 - **Rationale:** Describe what influenced the development of the improvement or innovations. Was this from feedback by staff or guests, competitor analysis, technological advances, new opportunities being available, or other reasons as to why the improvement or innovation was developed.
 - **Demonstrate research and insights:** Include internal research, such as customer feedback, surveys, or operational data, and external insights from market intelligence, industry reports, or media highlighting consumer trends. An impactful response should clearly show how this research informed your planning and how the resulting innovations align with your business's primary goals and strategies.
 - **Highlighting outcomes:** The effectiveness of your response lies in demonstrating measurable outcomes. Include:

- **Benefits:** Specify who benefited—your business, customers, staff, the community, or the industry.
- **Data-driven results:** Quantify outcomes using KPIs, customer satisfaction scores, or revenue increases.
- **Testimonials:** Include before-and-after customer feedback to show impact.
- **Media and PR:** Highlight any press coverage or recognition received.
- **Honest reflection:** If outcomes fell short, explain why and share any learnings or adjustments made.

Example

Improvement Activity 1: Integrate an online booking platform to make accommodation available on our website for direct bookings, not just on third-party sites.

What specific improvements has the business implemented in its operations and/or the product offering during the qualifying period? Keep the response here to one line, providing a basic introduction to the improvement.

Describe the Improvement:

Provide further detail on the improvement.

We integrated the Little Hotelier booking system into our website in August 20XX, enabling seamless direct bookings for customers. This upgrade also included training staff on the new system, redesigning our website's user interface to ensure compatibility, and launching a targeted marketing campaign to promote direct bookings. Additionally, we enhanced the booking process with features such as live room availability and pricing transparency, ensuring a smoother and more customer-friendly experience.

Rationale:

This project was a key deliverable of our 20XX Business Plan, aimed at reducing costs associated with third-party booking commissions and increasing direct engagement with customers. Research from our customer feedback survey highlighted frustrations with third-party booking processes, and 55% of people said they would book directly if that were an option. This is in line with market trends, which suggest a growing preference for direct interactions with businesses.

Specific Goals:

What specific goals did the business aim to achieve with this improvement?

- Increase direct bookings by 15% YOY from 5,000 people in 20XX/20XX to 5,750 people in XX/XX to increase our revenue and decrease agent commission.
- Increase average annual occupancy from 70% to 80%.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve the booking process for customers, allowing them to book on our website instead of third-party sites. - Launch paid advertising campaigns to promote direct bookings and enhance brand awareness.
	<p>Outcomes: <i>What were the measurable results of these changes?</i></p> <p>Results exceeded KPIs set within specific project goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little Hotelier implemented in Aug 20XX. - Direct bookings increased from 3% to 17% YOY. - Overall occupancy increased by 12% YOY. - Third-party commission was reduced by \$19,800 YOY. - Our customer survey indicated 91% of people found the new booking process user-friendly. - Social media campaign launched in September 20XX, with \$49,855 worth of bookings from a \$2,000 investment.

TOP TIP – Examples

Provide strong examples that look beyond standard business practices. In some questions, you can show up to five examples; however, consider if it is in your best interest to use the maximum examples available or to provide deeper insights into a smaller number of examples.

Supporting Evidence

Response Guide

Provide evidence to support your response. For example:

- An image of the improvement
- A testimonial demonstrating the outcome (NOTE: the main content of the testimonial must appear in the written response)
- Before and after images of works
- An infographic e.g. graph, demonstrating the outcomes.

- Graphs showing the increase in direct bookings and occupancy rates.
- Customer survey results.

- Google Analytics or Little Hotelier reports.
- Show transformation of a space, experience, or product development.
- Visually highlight added experiences/services and their impact.
- Show increased demand for the new offering over time.
- Screenshots of new systems such as booking platforms, mobile apps, or digital guest interfaces.
- Images of staff engaged in workshops or online learning.
- Data on increased morale, retention, or skill improvements.
- Photos of upgraded accessibility facilities, eg. ramps, wider doorways, accessible vehicles, or inclusive signage.



6.6 Excellence in Marketing

Question 3.1

5 points

A. Provide an overview of the business's primary target market.

B. Provide visual evidence to support your answer.

NOTE: For North Coast Regional Tourism Awards you are only required to identify your Primary Target Market. Focus on one only.

Ensure NA is entered in subsequent boxes, which enables you to submit.

Provide a brief introduction to the business's target markets and how the business identified its top 2 to 3 markets.

EXAMPLE

Name of Target Market:

What stage is the target market in for the business?

Identify if this is Primary Market, Secondary Market, Growth Market or Emerging Market.

(tick box)

Target market characteristics

Describe the target market i.e. who are they, where are they from, age, behaviours and motivations.

How does the business meet the expectations of this target market?

Demonstrate how you have tailored the business to the target market.

What research have you undertaken to confirm this target market is right for the business?

Describe the research or analysis undertaken to determine that this target market and their characteristics are suitable to the business.

Response Guidance

Provide between 2–3 markets.

A **target market** is a specific group of potential customers that a business directs its marketing efforts and products towards.

Identify the various characteristics such as demographics, psychographics, geographic location, and buying behaviour of the selected target market.

Demonstrate how the business tailors its products/service/visitor experience to effectively reach and engage the target market.

(?) Target Market Characteristics

For the target market characteristics, consider the following:

- **Geographic – Where they are:** Where the people live or visit
- **Demographic – Who they are:** Their age, family size, income, or lifestyle, such as families, retirees, or holidaymakers.
- **Psychographic – What they care about:** What they enjoy, believe in, or value, like being active, spending time outdoors, or supporting local businesses.
- **Behavioural – What they do, how they act:** e.g. like hiring bikes, exploring the area, or looking for fun activities.
- **Motivations – What drives them, why they do things:** e.g. like wanting to have family adventures, stay healthy, or trying something new.

(?) Meeting the expectations of a target market

Demonstrate the business's understanding of the target market's needs, preferences, and behaviours, and how the business has tailored its products, services or experiences to meet these needs.

(?) Research

Outline how the business has determined that this target market is suitable for the business. What research was undertaken, and what was concluded from this research.

Understanding Question 3.1

To create a compelling response to this question, provide a clear and well-structured overview of two or three of your business's target markets. Describe who they are, where they are from, their age group, how they book travel, what motivates and inspires them, and how your products and experiences meet their expectations.

Highlight the alignment between these target markets and your business offerings, strategic goals, and regional or state tourism objectives.

Support your response with research, such as customer surveys, booking data, or market intelligence. Enhance your answer with supporting evidence like charts or infographics to present data effectively, ensuring all visuals are clearly labelled and explained.

What Judges Are Looking For

- A well-structured and clear explanation of your target markets, explaining why they were chosen.
- A deep understanding of your audience and a strategic approach to engaging and meeting their expectations.
- Evidence-backed insights, such as surveys, research, and analytics, to validate your choices.

Tips for Crafting Your Answer

- **Be specific:** Provide detailed profiles of each target market, avoiding vague generalisations. It's essential to clearly define your markets, as they will be referenced in the next question.
- **Provide evidence:** Back your claims with tangible internal and external data.
 - o **External:** Visitor statistics, research reports, and customer feedback. Reference industry research, such as International Visitor Surveys, The Future of Tourism Report, Tourism Research Australia, and STO market profiles and insights.
 - o **Internal:** Data from digital surveys, internal sales reports, past visitation statistics, and social media or Google Analytics insights.
- **Show a broad range of tactics:** Think across all areas of marketing, such as SEO, SEM, social media campaigns, online listings, sales, influencers, competitions, promo codes, EDMs, loyalty programs, print advertising, PR, media, brochure distribution, trade and industry etc.
- **Incorporate visuals:** Use charts, graphs, and infographics to present data effectively, ensuring all visuals are clearly labelled and explained.

TOP TIP

Keep in mind Q3.1 is worth 5 points while Q3.2 is worth 10 points. Therefore, allocate more word count in the 3-5 examples of marketing strategies you provide for Q3.2 as this is where bulk of the points are allocated

Suggested Approach and Examples

Introduction to the Business' Target Markets

NOTE: North Coast Regional Tourism Award entrants only need to provide their top Target Market

Ensure you enter NA in the subsequent boxes, which enables you to submit your entry.

Provide a brief introduction to the business's target markets and how the business identified its top 2 to 3 markets.

Consider the following:

- **Set the scene:** Consider the short overview setting the stage for a detailed exploration of your target markets and how they align with your product offerings.
- **Market intelligence:** Briefly discuss the research used to identify your top target markets. Highlight sources and emphasise how this research informs your strategic direction, ensuring your marketing efforts are well-targeted and data-driven.
- **Ideal customers:** If your Marketing Plan includes ideal customer templates or avatars, refer to them in the overview.
- **Values & goals:** Discuss how your strategy supports your vision, enhances customer experiences, and contributes to sustainable growth.

Example

Name of Target Market: _____ Couples from Melbourne _____		
	What stage is the target market in for the business? <i>Identify if this is Primary Market, Secondary Market, Growth Market or Emerging Market.</i>	Primary
	Target market characteristics <i>Describe the target market i.e. who are they, where are they from, age, behaviours and motivations</i>	Demographic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Couples aged 25-44, celebrating a special occasion or seeking a romantic escape. - Often Dual Income No Kids (DINKS) - 62% of the overall market. Geographic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater Melbourne

	<p>Psychographic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nature and beach - Food and wine - Peaceful surrounds - Outdoor activities - Supporting local business - Care about the environment <p>Behavioural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 87% female as key purchaser - 63% direct website booking - 6 weeks average lead time - Self-drive - Prefer self-contained accommodation - Exploring local wineries <p>Motivations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proximity to Melbourne - Prioritise wellness and relaxation - Seeking peaceful and intimate accommodation <p>Booking Source Airbnb, Instagram, Website or redeeming a gift voucher</p>
<p>How does the business meet the expectations of this target market? <i>Demonstrate how you have tailored the business to the target market.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cosy studio cabins with extras, including hampers and champagne. - Built outdoor bath, firepit, tennis, lounging areas, expansive private gardens - Environmental initiatives - Wedding and elopement packages
<p>What research have you undertaken to confirm this target market is right for the business? <i>Describe the research or analysis undertaken to determine that this target market and their characteristics are suitable to the business.</i></p>	<p>Guest Survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guests book for wineries (44%), the beach (43%), and food/dining (39%). - Activities during stays: 50% visited wineries, 82% enjoyed the beach, and 91% dined out. - Most loved: 72% valued connecting with nature and outdoor spaces, supported by offerings like the Secret Garden, firepit, and lawn games. <p>Social Media Insights:</p> <p>91% of followers are females aged 25-44, seeking outdoor activities, relaxation, and proximity to shops, dining, and wineries.</p>

	<p>Airbnb Data:</p> <p>Average stay is 2.3 nights, aligning with a two-night minimum policy for weekend getaways.</p> <p>Tourism Greater Geelong & Bellarine (TGGB) Corporate Plan 2021-2025:</p> <p>83% of visitors to the region are from Victoria, with 56% of guests from Melbourne, matching the visitor profile.</p> <p>Tourism Research Australia:</p> <p>Social and outdoor/nature activities are top attractions for visitors to the Bellarine Peninsula, aligning with the business's offerings.</p>
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Supporting Evidence

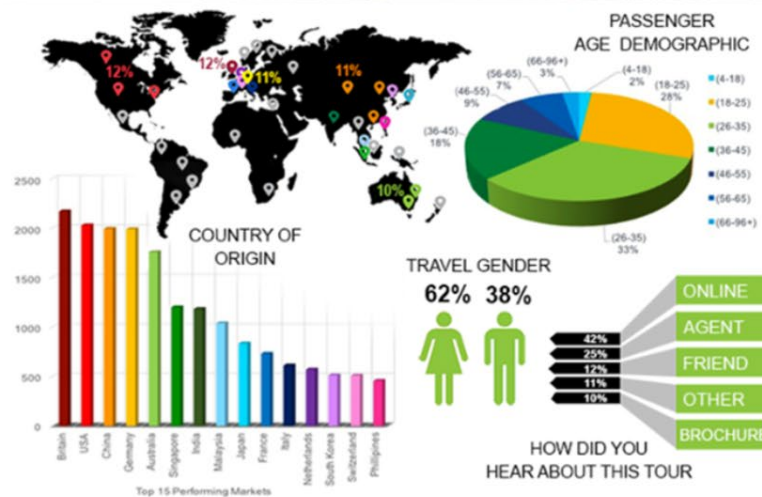
Response Guide

Provide evidence to support your response. For example:

- *An image of the target market*
- *An infographic e.g. graph demonstrating the market characteristics*

- Include a visual representation of the target markets, such as an infographic showing key demographics, personas and geographic segments.
- Use pie charts or bar graphs to clearly display visitor origins and demographics, such as the percentage breakdown of guests by location or age group.
- Incorporate graphs or charts from past guest surveys demonstrating preferences, activities, and satisfaction levels during their stay.
- Include graphs or statistics from internal market research, such as booking trends or Airbnb data, and ensure all visuals are well-labelled and explained.
- ReviewPro has valuable data and insights that can be accessed via your free account (all entrants get a free ReviewPro account).
- Include photos of popular experiences or facilities, such as outdoor spaces, gardens, or dining areas, to visually connect your offerings with guest preferences.
- Provide a screenshot or summary infographic of your social media analytics, showing follower demographics or engagement trends.
- Include a snippet of customer feedback or reviews highlighting alignment with target market needs and satisfaction.

Supporting Evidence Examples



Sample pie graph indicating where guests come from (geographic)/



Sample pie chart indicating target markets by market segment descriptors.



Question 3.2

10 points

- A. Provide 1-2 examples of marketing strategies the business implemented during the qualifying period, along with their outcomes.
- B. Provide visual evidence to support your answer.

Provide a short overview of the business approach towards developing its marketing strategies.

EXAMPLE

Marketing Strategy 1:

What was the marketing strategy? E.g. was it a campaign, an exhibition, an event, a partnership, or other marketing initiative?

Objective:	<i>Provide quantifiable objectives for the strategy.</i>
Target Market:	<i>As per market/s identified in Q3.1</i>
Concept:	<i>Provide greater detail of the strategy.</i>
Rationale and Research:	<i>Describe the research and analysis undertaken to determine that this strategy will achieve the objectives and reach the intended target market.</i>
Activity/Tactics:	<i>Describe the activities or tactics used in the strategy.</i>
How does this strategy align with local, regional or state destination/marketing plans?	<i>Detail how the local, regional or state destination/marketing plans were considered in the development of the strategy.</i>
What were the outcomes	<i>E.g. an increase to website traffic by 21% which generated an increase in online bookings by 30%</i>

NOTE: North Coast Regional Tourism Award entrants only need to provide 1 – 2 examples of Marketing Strategies

Ensure you enter NA in the subsequent boxes, which enables you to submit your entry.

Response Guidance

Provide between 3-5 examples.

It is recommended that you include examples that differ to any of the improvements you have included in Q2.1.

(?) Objectives

Provide details on the business's marketing objective.

Objectives or goals can include, but are not limited to:

- *Improve brand awareness*
- *Increase sales*
- *Higher number of leads*
- *Attract new customers*
- *Improve customer retention*
- *Increase online engagement*
- *Expand into new markets*
- *Optimise ROI*
- *Highlight new features/experiences*

Be sure to provide some quantifiable objectives e.g. increase leads from website by 10%.

(?) Target Market

Be sure to align this to one or more of the markets identified in Q3.1.

(?) Concept

This is where you can provide an overview of the strategy outlining its key highlights.

For example:

- *A digital campaign to highlight the unique selling proposition of the business*
- *A PR campaign to highlight how the business fulfils specific visitor needs*
- *Improved website content to create an emotional connection with visitors*
- *Targeted email campaign conveying key business ethics/commitments e.g. sustainability or accessibility*
- *Social campaign demonstrating how the business aligns with target markets values, preferences etc.*

(?) Rationale

Why did the business execute this strategy?

And what research was used to support the development of this strategy, e.g. visitor feedback, ticket sales, digital analytics etc.

(?) Activity/Tactics

Describe the activities or tactics used in the strategy

Different channels can include, but are not limited to:

- Digital Advertising
- Emails
- Events
- Influencer marketing
- Search Engine Optimisation
- Social Media
- Traditional Marketing
- Trade activities

(?) Align with local, regional or state destination/marketing plans

Demonstrate how the activity aligns with local, regional or state destination/marketing plans.

(?) Outcomes

Provide measurable results that demonstrate to the judge the outcome of the strategies.

Consider what learnings were made during this process, particularly if intended outcomes were not achieved.

Be sure these results relate back to your specific objectives.

Understanding Question 3.2

Now that the judges are familiar with your target markets and their alignment with your business, it's time to highlight the marketing strategies you executed during the qualifying period. This question lets you showcase how your business strategically and creatively targeted, engaged, and retained its audiences.

Clearly articulate the rationale behind your concepts, detailing the specific activities undertaken, who was involved, and how these initiatives align with broader tourism objectives and strategies.

To strengthen your response, include supporting data or metrics that demonstrate the effectiveness of your efforts, such as increases in sales, enhanced customer engagement, or heightened brand awareness. This combination of strategic insight and measurable outcomes will illustrate the impact of your marketing efforts.

What Judges Are Looking For

- Strategic thinking, innovation, creativity, tactical execution, and measurable results.
- A detailed account of the marketing strategies you implemented during the qualifying period, supported by research demonstrating their relevance to your target markets.
- The connection between your marketing efforts and overall business objectives.
- How your marketing strategies were thoughtfully planned, effectively executed, and aligned with broader industry goals.
- Use supporting evidence, such as campaign screenshots, graphs, or photos, to illustrate key data and outcomes and ensure your submission is compelling and impactful.

Tips for Crafting Your Answer

- **Showcase diversity:** Choose marketing strategies with the best positive measured outcomes and aim for diversity, including a wide range of approaches such as digital marketing, website updates or SEO, sales, Media & PR, and trade initiatives.
- **Adaptations and innovation:** Highlight any creative approaches or adjustments made during the qualifying period to address emerging trends or opportunities.
- **Customer engagement:** Share examples like online competitions, promo codes, email campaigns, or thank-you emails with discounts to grow databases and build loyalty.
- **Repeat business:** Outline initiatives that encourage repeat customers and foster long-term loyalty.
- **Trade and industry participation:** Detail attendance at trade events such as ATE, Meeting Place, expos, or roadshows.
- **Partnerships:** Highlight co-operative marketing initiatives, trade or media famils, partnerships with your RTO, and collaborations with OTAs, ITOs, or traditional agents.
- **Strategic alignment:** Show how your target markets and strategies align with regional or national tourism markets and strategies—reference resources from your Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) or State Tourism Organisation (STO). Explore tools on your STO's corporate website or Tourism Australia's Markets and Industry Sectors page for valuable insights.
- **Highlight measurable outcomes:** Include data such as KPIs, customer satisfaction scores, revenue increases, or other quantifiable results. Mention notable media coverage or recognition received.
- **Align with core values:** Ensure all marketing efforts reflect your business's values and reinforce authenticity and strategic vision.
- **Context for results:** If outcomes were below expectations, explain why and what you learned. For pending outcomes, include any available data and forecasted results.

Suggested Approach and Examples

Provide a short overview of the business approach towards developing its marketing strategies.

- Complete the short overview by giving a brief introduction to your general approach to marketing.
- Consider the following:
 - **Strategic planning and responsibilities:** Identify who drives marketing efforts within your business. How does your team plan, review, and update your marketing strategies, and what is the frequency of these updates?
 - **Reference documents:** Name strategic plans and documents, such as your *Strategic Marketing Plan 20XX/XX*, and note how they all feed into each other.
 - **Brand identity:** Emphasise consistent brand messaging across all marketing collateral. Highlight rebranding efforts, alignment initiatives, or new materials introduced during the qualifying period.

Example

Marketing Strategy 1: Become Export Ready	
What was the marketing strategy? E.g. was it a campaign, an exhibition, an event, a partnership, or other marketing initiative?	
Objective:	Increase trade bookings from 0% to 10% YOY by building relationships with trade (traditional agents, ITOs and Wholesalers).
Target Market:	As per market/s identified in Q3.1 International (new market)
Concept:	Grow our international market share by engaging with the industry to become export-ready and make our products available through the distribution system.
Rationale and Research:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As we have diversified and expanded our product offering to offer private tours, it's time to tap into new markets. - Using Tourism Research Australia's Visitor Arrival Stats 20XX, Tourism Australia's Future of Demand Report 20XX, and SATC market updates, we identified South East Asia, US & Western Europe as markets that align with our product offerings.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our Google Analytics shows increased visitation to our website from these markets and a small number of direct bookings in 20XX/XX (5%).
Activity/Tactics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Completed Quality Tourism Framework (Awards Portal) International Ready program. - Used industry resources to learn about the distribution system. - Created an action plan on Trello with key responsibilities. - Researched relevant tradeshow to attend and put into the marketing budget. - Engaged with SATC to find out who their Key Distribution Partners (KDPs) are. - Start to connect with KDPs.
How does this strategy align with local, regional or state marketing plans?	<p>Regional Aligned with the Eyre Peninsula Destination Management Plan under the focus area of Industry Capability: "Raise the capability of the Eyre Peninsula tourism industry to develop quality visitor experiences, attract visitors via distribution channels, and manage sustainable businesses."</p> <p>State Aligned with the SATC International Marketing Strategy 20xx, focusing on the implementation of key distribution partners and travel trade marketing initiatives.</p>
What were the outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Successful in receiving ATIC International Ready Accreditation. - Set new commissionable agent rates. - Created Agent Presentation. - Created Agent OneDrive with rates, images, products, and T&Cs. - Attended Meeting Place November 20xx ATE April 20xx. - Secured contracts with 12 KDPs across new markets, including Best of Travel Group, AOT, Trailfinders, FTI, and Pelago. - Have products listed on several major OTA's, including Viator, Get Your Guide and Klook. - Trade bookings in 24/25 up from 0% to 7%. While we didn't reach the 10% goal, we realise this will take time and next year, our goal is to increase from 7% to 15%. - International clients up from 10% to 19% in 20XX/XX.

Supporting Evidence

Response Guide

Provide visual evidence demonstrating the marketing activity.

Videos can be included, however do not produce a video for the specific purpose to respond to this question, it must have been produced as part of the activity.

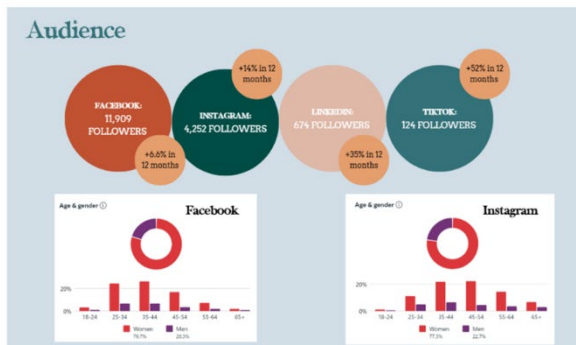
Examples of images/video evidence can include:

- *Instagram Reel*
- *TikTok*
- *Video segment on TV*
- *TV Commercial*

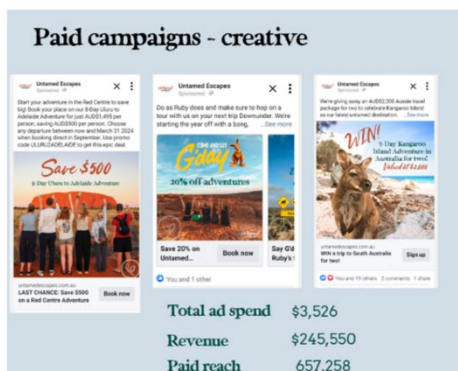
- Create a collage showcasing your brand's collateral and application in the strategies you have outlined above.
- Include a video created or used as part of a marketing campaign, such as an Instagram Reel, TikTok, YouTube, website video, or TV Commercial.
- Include screenshots of social media posts, EDMs, and campaign materials or communications.
- Use screenshots of Google Analytics or Facebook engagement statistics to demonstrate quantifiable results from your campaign visually.
- Include images of you at a tradeshow with measured outcomes layered on them.

Examples

Infographic showing social media audience statistics.



Infographic showing marketing campaigns and results.



TOP TIP

Ensure your supporting images provide clear evidence of strategies and outcomes. For example, don't rely solely on a screenshot of increased website traffic—include the data explicitly and contextualise it within your written response. When creating infographics, focus on clarity and readability; avoid overcrowding with too much information.

6.7 Excellence in Customer Service

Question 4.1

10 points

- What initiatives has the business put in place during the qualifying period to deliver excellent customer service throughout the visitor journey?
- Provide visual evidence to support your answer.

Provide a brief overview of the business's customer service philosophy.



EXAMPLE

Customer Service Initiative 1.		
	Describe the initiative that enhances the business customer service:	
	At what stage of the visitor journey does this impact? (Pre, During, Post, All)	(checkbox with multiple choice option)
	What influenced the development of this initiative?	
	What investment has been made in this aspect of the visitor experience?	
	What outcomes have come from this initiative?	

NOTE: North Coast Regional Tourism Award entrants only need to provide 1 – 2 examples

Ensure you enter NA in the subsequent boxes, which enables you to submit your entry.

Response Guidance

Provide the top 3 – 5 examples.

Focus on the initiatives that have specifically related to customer service and provide examples that have not been included in question 2.1.

Ensure that you include activity that is new in the qualifying period.

This could include, but is not limited to:

- Staff training and development
- Customer feedback and post-stay surveys
- Improved booking processes
- Improved service delivery Front of House
- Additional services e.g. bed turn down services

(?) Describe the initiative

Consider the various touchpoints of visitor engagement and how these have been enhanced, specifically for the customer experience.

(?) Stage of the visitor journey

Specify at what point the initiative takes place within the visitor journey – pre, during, post or at all points.

(?) Influence of Initiative

Consider why the business focused on improving this specific customer experience.

This could be, but is not limited to examples such as:

- Customer feedback
- Staff input
- Competitive landscape
- Data/survey insights
- Shift in customer demands or expectations

(?) Investment

Consider all resources put towards the initiative. This could be financial, time investment in staff, technologies, supply chain etc.

(?) Outcomes

Provide examples of what outcomes were achieved as a result of the initiative. For example, increased online ratings by XX%, return visitation etc.

You could include testimonials here to demonstrate an improved visitor experience.

Understanding Question 4.1

This question allows you to showcase how your business goes above and beyond to deliver exceptional customer service and memorable experiences at all stages of the visitor journey. Highlight how customer service principles are integrated into every area of your business, resulting in consistent quality and excellence.

Demonstrate to the judges how your business proactively seeks, analyses, and acts on feedback to continuously improve the visitor experience.

It's essential to consider the entire visitor journey—from the pre-visit stage (when customers are researching and booking) to the post-visit stage. Also, ensure you link your responses to your target markets, as different markets may experience unique customer journeys.

What Judges Are Looking For

- A clear and well-defined customer service philosophy or values that form the foundation of your approach to delivering award-winning tourism experiences.
- Examples of new initiatives or processes introduced during the qualifying period that enhance the visitor journey
- How feedback is collected and utilised to refine and improve.
- Evidence of strong systems and processes that guarantee outstanding service delivery
- Investments in staff training, development, and facilities to continually elevate the customer experience.

Tips for Crafting Your Answer

- **Philosophy/Values:** Include a statement of your customer service philosophy. Explain how your values are delivered throughout your business and guide your team in decision-making and customer service initiatives. Consider how these principles extend to other stakeholders, such as suppliers, travel agents, and industry partners.
- **Systems & Processes:** Consider the systems and processes and standard operating procedures (SOPs) in place to deliver exceptional service at every touchpoint. Provide examples to show HOW they improve customer experience.
- **People:** Consider your recruitment, induction, training and professional development processes and how they positively impact customer experiences. Highlight initiatives such as:
 - Formal customer service qualifications or training programs.
 - Regular staff meetings to reinforce customer service goals.
 - Incentive or rewards programs for exceptional performance.
 - Investments in staff development during the qualifying period.

- **Customer service journey:** Consider how your business ensures exceptional service across the entire visitor journey:
 - **Pre-visit:** Is your website user-friendly and intuitive? How can customers communicate with you (e.g., chat, email, phone)? What makes your booking process seamless?
 - **During the visit:** How do you exceed expectations during the experience or visit? What special touches make it memorable?
 - **Post-visit:** How do you gather feedback and reviews? Do you offer loyalty programs or memberships for repeat customers? How do you stay in touch with visitors and remain front of mind?
- **Feedback:** Describe how you collect and use customer feedback to improve services. Consider:
 - Are you gathering digital feedback, such as post-visit surveys?
 - Highlight ratings or reviews on platforms like TripAdvisor, Booking.com, or Google.
 - Who is responsible for managing feedback, and how do the insights drive policy, procedure, or operational changes?
 - Mention awards or recognitions earned that validate your commitment to customer service excellence.
- **Complaints Policy:** Describe your Complaints Policy, outlining how complaints are logged, addressed, and mitigated to prevent recurrence. Additionally, mention if you have a continuous improvement plan and how it is managed to ensure ongoing service excellence.

TOP TIP

Focus on the difference between Service and Experience

Customer Service is about meeting expectations through the actions you take, while Customer Experience reflects the emotions and impressions visitors have—shaped by how your service goes above and beyond to leave a lasting impact.

Suggested Approach and Examples

Complete the brief introduction by providing a concise overview of your approach to customer service excellence and discussing some of the above points.

Provide a brief overview of the businesses customer service philosophy.

Also, consider the following:

- **Link to Mission/Vision/Values:** Share how your customer service philosophy is embedded into your culture.

EXAMPLE

Riverbend Hotel strives to maintain an extraordinary level of passion to inspire and excite our staff, guests, and business partners in everything we do. Our customer service philosophy fosters an inspiring and positive culture, empowering our team to provide exceptional service. Our dedication to professional development, investment in technologies, and sustainability practices reflects our unwavering commitment to excellence.

- **Systems and processes in action:** Highlight systems or processes that deliver exceptional service. Judges want to know that they are in place and HOW they positively impact the guest experience. Examples might include:
 - Online booking systems that streamline the customer journey.
 - Maintenance schedules to ensure all facilities remain in optimal condition.
 - A process for addressing customer complaints promptly, such as a dedicated service recovery protocol.
- **Staff training initiatives:** Provide examples of training programs or initiatives that have positively impacted the visitor experience. For instance:

EXAMPLE - Staff training

Through our Professional Growth Program (PGP), we invested \$7,800 in staff training during the qualifying period. This included workshops on advanced customer engagement, resulting in a 15% increase in positive guest feedback and a 20% increase in repeat bookings.

Example

Customer Service Initiative 1.		
	Describe the initiative that enhances the business customer service:	<p>In September, we introduced paper feedback forms placed inside each cabin to gain deeper insights into our guests' experiences, preferences, and areas for improvement.</p> <p>We rarely received constructive feedback through digital reviews, which we recognised as a missed opportunity for actionable improvements. To address</p>

		this, we decided to try an alternative feedback channel using paper surveys, as not all guests take the time or make a habit of submitting online reviews, even when provided with links post-stay.
	At what stage of the Visitor Journey does this impact? (Pre, During, Post, All)	(checkbox with multiple choice option) During
	What influenced the development of this initiative?	<p>We wanted to gain deeper insights into our guests and their experiences—how they used the space, what they loved, and, most importantly, how we could enhance their stay.</p> <p>This initiative aligned with our core value of "Excellence" by enabling us to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allocate resources more effectively to improve key guest touchpoints. Identifying guests' favourite features allowed us to enhance and promote those areas in marketing efforts. - Evaluate the impact of our recommendations on local businesses. - Highlight and address areas requiring improvement or where practical solutions were missing. - Track changes in guest satisfaction over time. - Demonstrate to guests that their opinions are valued. <p>Research:</p> <p><i>External:</i> Studies show that paper surveys generate higher response rates and are perceived as more anonymous, leading to more honest feedback (Nulty, 2002).</p> <p><i>Internal:</i> In our history, our lowest online review rating is four out of five stars, with only three reviews mentioning improvements. This suggests that many guests either didn't see their suggestions as significant enough to share publicly or chose not to leave us a review.</p>

	What investment has been made in this aspect of the visitor experience?	<p>Minimal financial investment was required to implement this initiative. Feedback forms were designed in-house and cost \$200 for printing on recycled paper.</p>
	What outcomes have come from this initiative?	<p>The positive outcomes have exceeded expectations and include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 35% increase in feedback form return rates YOY, exceeding our goal of 20%. - 16 responses making helpful suggestions which were immediately actioned to improve guest experience: - Added a small axe to the firepit to assist with wood supply; - Added wheelie bins to accommodate longer stays; - Adjusted location of garden irrigation so that outdoor cushions wouldn't get wet; - Added spices to pantry staples; - Checking gas lighters was added to the housekeeping checklist to ensure they were never empty. - 100% of respondents said they left feeling more relaxed and would recommend us to family or friends. - A favourite guest spot identified from feedback—the verandah—was promoted on social media, successfully filling a last-minute cancellation. - The feedback informed our next capital works projects, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The accessible bathroom renovation - Additional screening near outdoor bath areas to increase privacy - A roof was built over the BBQ area to protect it from weather - Enhancing bathroom design with larger sinks and improved tiling.

Supporting Evidence

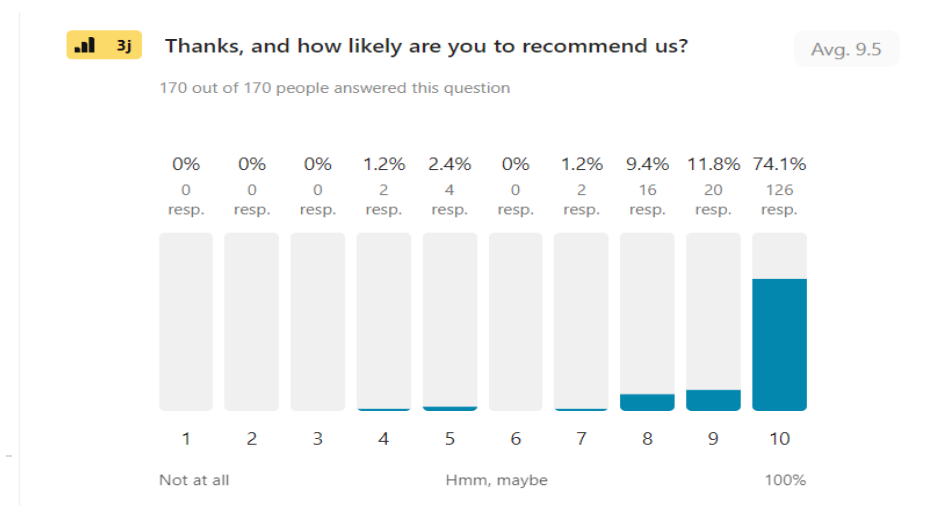
Response Guidance

This is where you can include images to support your answer in Q4.1.A [Examples](#) of the type of evidence you could include are:

- Staff initiatives
- Customer initiatives in place
- A testimonial demonstrating the outcome (NOTE: the main content of the testimonial must appear in the written response)

- Use a collage or before-and-after images to highlight the impact of a significant renovation.
- Add graphs or charts from guest surveys, Facebook polls, or other feedback tools.
- Show a progression by including a customer complaint or negative feedback before the innovation and a positive review afterwards.
- Create an infographic combining screenshots, customer feedback (pre- and post-implementation), and images of the actual innovation.
- Incorporate graphs and data from tools that measure outcomes, such as increased bookings or satisfaction scores.
- Use an infographic to present positive reviews from platforms like TripAdvisor, Booking.com, or Google, or combine several reviews into a collage. Ensure these provide evidence for the points already discussed.
- Include an infographic of your vision, mission, or values.
- Add flowcharts that detail training processes or customer service systems.
- Include images of staff participating in training courses, team bonding activities, or familiarisation trips.
- Feature a testimonial from a staff member expressing appreciation for the workplace culture or discussing the impact of completed training on their performance.

Example of screenshot from Typeform Guest Survey.



TOP TIP – Testimonials & Reviews

Incorporate testimonials and review excerpts throughout your submission. Carefully integrate excerpts directly into your narrative where they align with your points—this will use up word count effectively. Additionally, present the full testimonials as supporting evidence. This dual approach reinforces credibility and ensures judges see both context and proof.

Question 4.2

5 points

- A. How has the business made improvements to be more inclusive throughout the qualifying period?
- B. Provide visual evidence to support your answer.

NOTE: North Coast Regional Tourism Award entrants only need to provide 1 – 2 examples

Ensure you enter NA in the subsequent boxes, which enables you to submit your entry.

Response Guidance

Demonstrate how the business has actively considered, and where able, met the needs of a diverse community. This could include:

- *Staff training*
- *Management and leadership*
- *Business policy making*
- *Improved/modified systems/operations/facilities*

Demonstrate how the business has analysed its target markets and identified any specific requirements that may need to be considered for these guests.

Understanding Question 4.2

To effectively answer this question, it's important to distinguish between **Accessibility** and **Inclusion**:

- **Accessibility** focuses on ensuring everyone, regardless of disability, special needs, race, or gender, has equal opportunities to access services and activities, particularly tourism experiences. It involves addressing physical, digital, and procedural barriers to meet the needs of all stakeholders.
- **Inclusion** goes beyond accessibility, creating an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and able to participate without needing to change, conform, or feel excluded.

This question asks you to demonstrate how your business actively considers visitors' specific needs and supports a diverse community.

What Judges Are Looking For

- Evidence of thoughtful and impactful actions demonstrating your business's commitment to accessibility and inclusion as part of delivering high-quality customer experiences.
- Examples of how your products or services have been made accessible or inclusive for individuals or groups that previously faced barriers to participation.
- Clear connections between your initiatives and the diverse needs of your target markets.
- Measurable outcomes and successes that highlight the effectiveness of your efforts in enhancing the guest experience for those with diverse needs.

Tips for Crafting Your Answer

- **Think Broadly:** Consider the diverse needs of your target markets, including:
 - Mobility issues (e.g., wheelchairs, walking aids, elderly).
 - Medical conditions (e.g., asthma, allergies).
 - Market segments (e.g., families with young children, LGBTQIA+, business travellers).
 - Sensory needs (e.g., autism, impaired vision or hearing).
 - Dietary requirements.
 - Intellectual or cognitive disabilities.
 - Parking for tour buses or large groups.
 - International visitors or non-English speakers.
- **Business objectives:** If accessibility and inclusion align with your core values or business goals, highlight this commitment and describe efforts to achieve it.

- **Addressing barriers:** Highlight how your business has tackled barriers such as cultural differences, language limitations, physical constraints, intellectual or cognitive challenges, or dietary restrictions.
- **Alignment with target markets:** Demonstrate how your initiatives align with the needs of your target markets. Explain how specific products or services have been tailored for diverse guest segments.
- **Accessible products and experiences:** Detail any specific offerings for guests with diverse needs. Explain how you identify customer requirements and cater to them effectively.
- **Accessibility plans:** Outline any Accessibility Plans, Policies, or Statements your business has developed.
- **Audits and accreditations:** Mention any Accessibility Audits, Risk Assessments, or accreditations your business has undertaken.
- **Industry engagement:** Share if your team has attended workshops, conferences, or training on accessible tourism.
- **Advocacy:** Have you been actively promoting the importance of accessibility and inclusion, inspiring other businesses to adopt similar practices?
- **Investment:** Detail improvements to facilities or operations to enhance accessibility and show your investment in creating inclusive experiences.
- **Examples and outcomes:** Share tangible examples of inclusivity initiatives supported by measurable outcomes or successes.
- **Case Studies:** Use a case study highlighting a significant achievement or improvement.

TOP TIP - THE POWER OF CASE STUDIES

Case studies are an excellent way to showcase the success of your initiatives because they provide a compelling narrative that demonstrates real-world impact. By focusing on a specific example, you can clearly illustrate how an initiative was implemented, the challenges addressed, and the measurable outcomes achieved. A well-crafted case study helps judges understand the practical application and effectiveness of your efforts while adding authenticity to your submission through detailed evidence and testimonials.

Use headings for your case study such as Introduction, The Problem, The Initiative, Execution, Outcomes, Impact, Testimonials/Feedback, Supporting Evidence and Future Steps.

Suggested Approach and Examples

- **Highlight measurable outcomes:** Include data such as KPIs, customer satisfaction scores, revenue increases, or other quantifiable results. Mention notable media coverage or recognition received.
- **Philosophy and values:** Start by introducing your commitment to providing inclusive experiences and link to your values.
- **Layout:** This answer has no sub questions, so you are encouraged to use headings, paragraphs, dot points, and tables to organise your information clearly. Use a table like

the one below to break down the **WHO**, **WHAT**, and **OUTCOMES** of your inclusive initiatives.

- **Case study:** consider a case study to highlight a significant implementation or achievement.

SPECIFIC NEEDS	INCLUSIVE PRACTICES	OUTCOMES
Frail or elderly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Front row seats reserved. - Include regular toilet breaks in itineraries. - Space for walkers to be stored in the trailer during the tour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 91% rating on TripAdvisor and 12 positive comments in 20xx/xx about Guides going out of our way to accommodate elderly passengers.
Vision impaired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guide dogs welcome. - Sensory tours developed focusing on taste, touch and sounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12 vision-impaired passengers travelled in QP.
LGBTQA+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Display our inclusivity commitment on our website. - Welcome with Pride training. - Use an image of a same-sex couple in marketing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LGBTQA+ community safe and feel welcome.
Dietary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-arrival communication asks guests about dietary requirements for pre-ordered breakfast hampers. - Provide a range of milk in the fridge (full cream, skim, soy & almond) and vegan/gluten-free brownies. 	<p><i>TripAdvisor review – Nov 20XX.</i></p> <p><i>Absolutely amazing stay! The team went above and beyond to ensure our dietary needs were met, and we were delighted to find a variety of milk options in the fridge. The vegan brownies were to die for! It is clear they genuinely care about making everyone feel welcome and catered for and that it's not too much trouble!</i></p> <p><i>Anne – Sydney</i></p>

Supporting Evidence

Response Guidance

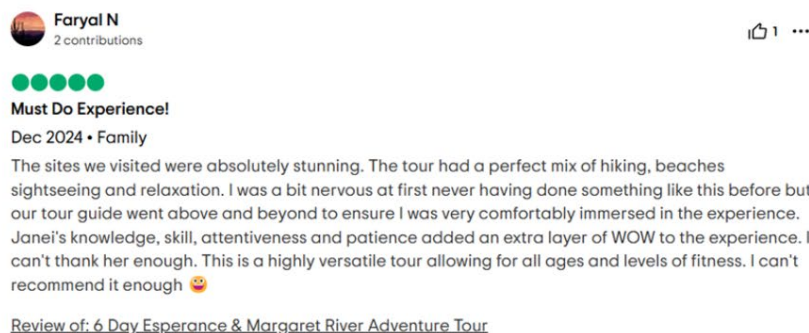
This is where you can include images to support your answer in Q4.2.A [Examples](#) of the type of evidence you can include are:

- *Inclusive initiatives in place*
 - *A testimonial demonstrating the outcome (NOTE: the main content of the testimonial must appear in the written response)*
-
- Include screenshots of the positive reviews or testimonials from guests with specific needs discussed in your answer.
 - Create a photo collage of various accessible practices across the business, such as ramps, accessible rooms, or inclusive signage.
 - Showcase before-and-after images of facilities enhanced to improve accessibility.
 - Include graphs or charts showing guest survey results, Facebook polls, or other tools used to measure the outcomes of your initiatives.
 - Graphs and data from tools you used to measure the outcomes can support your answer.

Collage showing improvements to accessibility and accreditation logos.



Proof of a review you have talked about in copy as a screenshot



6.8 Excellence in Sustainable & Responsible Business Practices

Question 5.1

10 points

- What efforts have been made in the qualifying period towards responsible and sustainable business practices?
- Provide visual evidence to support your answer.

NOTE: North Coast Regional Tourism Award entrants only need to provide 2 – 3 examples

Ensure you enter NA in the subsequent boxes, which enables you to submit your entry.

Provide an overview of the business philosophy on responsible and sustainable tourism.

/

EXAMPLE

	Select the type of activity	(drop down list)
Cultural		
	Provide an example of how the business supports the engagement and representation of culture. (E.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, heritage, religion.)	What were the outcomes? (E.g. increased employment opportunities for local indigenous community, greater visitor satisfaction in authentic storytelling.)
Example 1.		
Environmental		
	Provide an example of how the business minimises its impact on the environment. (E.g. water conservation, waste management/reduction/recycling, fuel and energy reduction, carbon reduction/offset, refuse initiatives, noise cancellation, wildlife destruction/interruption measures in place, participation in programs such as the Tourism Emissions Reduction Program.)	What were the outcomes? (E.g. the amounts saved/reduced in comparison to the previous year (or multiple years if you have good records.)
Example 1.		
Social/Community		
	Provide an example of how the business contributes to or benefits the local community. (E.g., supporting local businesses, product packaging, charitable donations, sponsorship, engagement with community groups, supporting local talent, school education and involvement, work experience, support of community fundraising.)	What were the outcomes? (E.g. the number of local people employed, the number of groups supported etc.)



Example 1.		
Economic		
	Provide an example of how the business supports the local economy. (E.g., local purchasing, creating job opportunities, promotion of local businesses, support of community funding initiatives, understanding of spend by the business customers to the region/community.)	What were the outcomes? (E.g. 75% of all our expenses were spent in a particular region.)
Example 1.		
Ethical		
	Provide an example of how the business acts ethically throughout its development. (E.g., through animal welfare, restoration, procurement, inclusivity, human slavery etc.)	What were the outcomes? (E.g. The number of online reviews that have improved.)
Example 1.		

Response Guidance

Please provide 2 to 5 examples.

This is an opportunity to offer deeper insight into how the business is achieving excellence in both business operations and tourism.

Try to include examples that have not already been identified in previous answers.

Businesses are encouraged to provide a response across all areas. However, it is essential to focus on the business's strengths to effectively showcase their unique capabilities and achievements.

Understanding Question 5.1

This question evaluates how your business has demonstrated responsible and sustainable practices during the qualifying period, focusing on the positive impact made across five key areas. You can provide multiple examples across the key areas or narrow it down to two or three.

- **Cultural Responsibility:** Highlight how your business supports and represents culture, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or other cultural heritage, religion, or local traditions. Demonstrate the initiatives undertaken to celebrate and preserve cultural aspects and their impact on your business and the broader community.
- **Environmental Responsibility:** Outline your approach to minimising environmental impact through strategies such as water conservation, waste reduction, carbon offset programs, restoring natural environments, or sustainability education.
- **Social Responsibility:** Showcase your engagement with the local community, such as collaborating with local businesses, supporting schools, participating in charitable activities, or engaging with community groups. Highlight how these efforts foster stronger relationships and benefit the community.
- **Economic Responsibility:** Demonstrate how your business supports the local economy through initiatives like sourcing locally, destination marketing, creating jobs, or promoting regional businesses.
- **Ethical Responsibility:** Explain how your business incorporates ethical practices, such as promoting animal welfare or ensuring inclusivity and fairness in operations.

What Judges Are Looking For

- Evidence of thoughtful and impactful practices showcasing your commitment to responsible tourism.
- To effectively demonstrate your business's commitment to responsible and sustainable or regenerative tourism practices, it is essential to clearly articulate the **What, Why, How, and Impact/Results** of each initiative.
- A comprehensive answer that demonstrates the tangible benefits of your efforts.

Tips for Crafting Your Answer

✓ Cultural Responsibility

Showcase your business's commitment to respecting, engaging with, and promoting diverse cultures, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or other cultural heritage, local traditions, and cultural education.

Activities and Initiatives:

Detail specific actions your business has taken to support cultural engagement and representation, such as:

- **Partnerships:** Collaborating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for cultural tours, cultural awareness training or workshops.
- **Acknowledgment of Country:** Do you include an Acknowledgment of Country on your website, tours, marketing materials, or property signage?
- **Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP):** Have you developed or implemented a RAP to guide your business's actions toward reconciliation?
- **Certification:** Do you have a certification to demonstrate your commitment to cultural respect?
- **Visitor Education:** Do you offer educational initiatives, such as interpretive signage, guided experiences, or cultural workshops, to inform guests about cultural significance?

Demonstrating Impact:

Provide examples of how these initiatives have positively impacted your business and community. Include measurable outcomes or qualitative feedback, such as:

- *"Hosted 10 cultural workshops during the qualifying period, engaging 300 participants and receiving a 95% satisfaction rating."*

Benefits to Your Business:

Highlight how these efforts have enhanced your business, such as improving guest experiences, increasing cultural awareness, or building stronger community ties.

✓ Environmental Responsibility

Explain your commitment to environmental sustainability and why it is integral to your business operations.

Activities and Initiatives:

Detail activities related to water conservation, waste management, energy efficiency, biodiversity protection, and emissions reduction. Examples include:

- **Water conservation:** Low-flow fixtures, drip irrigation, greywater recycling, drought-resistant plants.
- **Energy reduction:** Solar panels, energy-efficient appliances, insulation, and guest signage to encourage sustainable behaviours.
- **Waste management:** Recycling programs, eliminating single-use plastics, composting, and offering paperless options.
- **Other initiatives:** Carbon offset programs, sourcing local/seasonal produce, responsible supply chain policies, and supporting conservation projects.

Demonstrating Impact:

Provide evidence of how these initiatives have reduced your environmental footprint. Include measurable results, such as reductions in water or energy use or waste diverted from landfills.

Plans and Leadership:

Mention relevant plans or policies (e.g., Environmental Management Plans) and who is responsible for their implementation. Explain how sustainability is embedded across your business through staff engagement and communication with visitors, community, and industry partners.

Visitor Education:

Describe how you educate visitors about reducing their footprint via tips on your website, interpretation, social media, brochures, or signage.

Accreditations and Recognition:

Highlight any sustainability certifications (e.g., Eco-Tourism Australia, B-Corp) or awards your business has received for eco-leadership.

Additional Examples:

- Participation in conservation initiatives like Clean Up Australia Day.
- Policies on sustainable procurement, wildlife protection, or reducing supply chain impacts.
- Supporting citizen science or programs like 1% for the Planet.

✓ Social Responsibility

Explain your business's engagement with the local community and how these efforts have positively impacted both the community and your business. Highlight benefits such as enhanced reputation, employee motivation, or strengthened local support.

Activities and Initiatives:

Detail specific actions your business has taken to support the local community, such as:

- **Donations and sponsorships:** Monetary or in-kind contributions to local charities, events, or causes.
- **Special access or programs:** Offering loyalty programs or discounted access for locals.
- **Sharing information:** Promoting community information in your reception, website, or newsletters to refer business to other local organisations.
- **Support for Non-For-Profits:** Waiving conference room fees for local not-for-profit groups or providing spaces for community meetings.
- **Skill development:** Offering traineeships, apprenticeships, or work experience for local students.
- **Mentoring and volunteering:** Involvement in mentoring students or businesses, volunteering with local chambers or community associations, or supporting recovery efforts after significant events like floods or fires.
- **Community collaboration:** Working with groups like the Lions Club, CFS, or other local organisations and participating in local events or associations to strengthen ties and foster collaboration.

- **Providing facilities or infrastructure:** Offering function spaces to community groups.

Demonstrating Impact:

Where applicable, include measurable outcomes or anecdotal evidence to showcase the impact of your efforts. For example:

- *"In the qualifying period, we contributed \$5,000 worth of accommodation to local fundraising events, benefiting the town's community centre renovations."*

Benefits to Your Business:

Highlight how these efforts have benefited your business, such as increased community goodwill, stronger local partnerships, or positive employee engagement.

✓ Economic Responsibility

Explain how your business contributes financially to the local economy, focusing on monetary impact and measurable outcomes. Highlight specific spending, employment, and partnerships within the region.

Activities and Initiatives:

Consider specific actions your business has taken to support the local economy, such as:

- **Employment:** State how many staff are from the local area, expressed as a percentage, and calculate the total economic value of their wages.
- **Visitor spend:** Discuss the average spend of your visitors within the region and how you encourage them to support local attractions, restaurants, and businesses. Mention tools such as a website page promoting other local businesses.
- **Local trades and contractors:** Include the value of spending on local tradespeople and contractors during the qualifying period.
- **Purchasing policies:** Highlight local amenities, produce, or Australian-made goods purchased.
- **Supporting Local:** Showcase how local produce in minibars, hampers, or outlets has supported other businesses, potentially including testimonials from supplier partners.
- **Tourism development:** Detail the percentage of your budget invested in domestic or international marketing and its impact on the region.
- **Product packaging:** Collaboration with other local tourism businesses to create mutual packaging opportunities, increasing visitation for all involved.
- **Diversified markets:** Explain how your business serves non-tourist markets, such as Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions (MICE), service trades, or road crews.

Demonstrating Impact:

Provide specific financial data and percentages to showcase your contribution to the local economy. For example:

- *"Our partnerships with local suppliers generated an additional \$50,000 in revenue for regional businesses."*

Benefits to Your Business:

Highlight how these contributions have strengthened your business, such as increased community support, stronger supplier relationships, or enhanced reputation within the region.

✓ Ethical Responsibility

Understanding Ethical Practices:

Cambridge Dictionary defines business ethics as *"the rules, principles, and standards of deciding what is morally right or wrong when working."*

Business ethics involves implementing appropriate practices and policies in the workplace that reflect genuine decisions and positions you wish to act on. These can represent beliefs, establish trust with customers and employees, and demonstrate an understanding of your business's impact on society.

Ethics are often closely tied to your business values, brand principles, and personal or team values, influencing your operations across all areas. Consider your ethical responsibilities across your business and stakeholders, including your supply and distribution chains, and assess the impact of your choices.

Commitment to Ethical Practices:

Explain how your business's core values guide your ethical practices and decision-making. Highlight specific areas where ethical responsibilities are prioritised.

Activities and Initiatives:

Detail actions your business has taken to uphold ethical standards, including:

- **Wildlife and Environmental Ethics:**
 - Visitor education about appropriate wildlife interactions (e.g., maintaining distance, not feeding or taking selfies).
 - Ensuring marketing materials depict ethical wildlife practices (e.g., showing wildlife from a respectful distance).
 - Avoiding partnerships with suppliers using animals for human entertainment.
- **Ethical Sourcing:**

- Offering ethically produced souvenirs or products, such as Fair Trade or organic goods.
- Adopting a responsible procurement policy to source sustainable and eco-friendly products.
- **Promoting Culture and Community:**
 - Actively promoting local crafts, artists, and heritage to foster community pride.

Demonstrating Impact:

Explain the results of your ethical initiatives, providing measurable outcomes where possible. Examples include:

- *"Implemented a Fair Trade Procurement Policy, sourcing 100% organic, ethically produced guest amenities, reducing single-use plastic bottles by 4,800 in the qualifying period."*
- *"Partnered with a local artist collective, generating \$10,000 in sales and fostering cultural engagement for over 200 visitors."*

Benefits to Your Business:

Describe how these ethical practices have benefited your business, such as building customer trust, enhancing employee morale, strengthening community relationships, or elevating your reputation as a responsible operator.

Suggested Approach and Examples

Provide an overview of the business philosophy on responsible and sustainable tourism.

Start by summarising your overall philosophy around Responsible Tourism. If your vision, mission, or core values highlight the importance of being a responsible business, include that in your opening overview.

Consider the aforementioned things such as:

- What relevant documents and plans do you have in your business in this area, i.e. Environmental Goals & Objectives, Environmental Management Plans, Interpretation Plans, etc?
- Who is responsible for these plans, and how do you drive this through your whole business?

- Discuss how you share this message with staff, industry, community, customers, etc.
- Do you have a Green Committee or group?

Example

Cultural		
	Provide an example of how the business supports the engagement and representation of culture. E.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, heritage, religion	What were the outcomes?
Example 1.	<p>Driving Reconciliation</p> <p>Initiative:</p> <p>In 20XX, we developed and implemented our first RAP, guided by the Reflect framework of Reconciliation Australia. This plan outlines our commitment to meaningful actions that promote understanding, respect, and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>Key Actions:</p> <p>Cultural Awareness Training: Delivered to 100% of staff by a local Aboriginal cultural educator, ensuring our team understands the history and cultural significance of the land we operate on.</p> <p>Acknowledgement of Country Practices:</p> <p>Incorporated an Acknowledgement of Country into guest communications such as on our website, property entrance and email signatures.</p> <p>Partnership with Local Communities:</p> <p>Partnered with a local Aboriginal art collective to feature authentic artworks in guest rooms and public spaces, providing artists a platform for storytelling and income generation.</p>	<p>- Strengthened relationships with Traditional Owners and local Aboriginal communities.</p> <p>- Guest surveys indicated that 85% of respondents found the cultural elements of their stay to be a highlight, citing the walking tour and Indigenous artwork as particularly impactful.</p> <p>- Established a foundation for ongoing reconciliation efforts, with plans to advance to the Innovate RAP framework in 20XX.</p>
Example 2	<p>Case Study - Embracing and Honouring Indigenous Culture</p> <p>Problem:</p> <p>We recognised a gap in our understanding of Wadawurrung Indigenous history and the cultural</p>	<p>Impact:</p> <p>- We deepened our cultural understanding, enabling us to include First Nations perspectives authentically within our offering.</p>



	<p>significance of the land where our business is located. Without this knowledge, we felt unprepared to incorporate First Nations culture into our guest experience authentically.</p> <p>Solution:</p> <p>We launched 'Yarn on a Farm', an educational session hosted by Wadawurrung Traditional Owner Ash Skinner. This session provided valuable insights and meaningful engagement through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A traditional Smoking Ceremony and Welcome to Country. • Learning simple greetings and phrases in Wadawurrung language. • Gaining knowledge of the region's cultural significance, including its historical role as a place of abundance for fishing, hunting, and traditional practices using Yellowgums and saltbush. 	<p>- Developed connections between Indigenous philosophies of connection to place and our business mantra: <i>"To provide a personalised travel experience where guests leave feeling connected to nature, beautiful spaces, and our local region."</i></p> <p>- Inspired a more meaningful mission for accommodating visitors, enriched by a shared sense of connection between past and present.</p> <p>Future Actions:</p> <p>Currently compiling a guest booklet blending Ash's stories with our conservation work.</p>
Environmental		
	<p>Provide an example of how the business minimises its impact on the environment. (E.g. water conservation, waste management/reduction/recycling, fuel and energy reduction, carbon reduction/offset, refuse initiatives, noise cancellation, wildlife destruction/interruption measures in place, participation in programs such as the Tourism Emissions Reduction Program.)</p>	<p>What were the outcomes? (e.g. the amounts saved/reduced in comparison to the previous year (or multiple years if you have good records))</p>
Example 1.	<p>Continued Implementation of Our 5-Year Energy Reduction Plan</p> <p>As part of our commitment to achieving full energy self-sufficiency at our headquarters by 20XX, we have made significant strides during the qualifying period. Key activities included:</p> <p>Solar Panel Installation:</p> <p>In September 20xx, we invested \$18,000 to install solar panels on the depot roof, a major step toward renewable energy reliance.</p> <p>Light Timers:</p> <p>High-traffic areas such as the kitchen and bathroom were equipped with light timers, minimising unnecessary energy usage.</p>	<p>Energy Savings:</p> <p>These initiatives led to a remarkable reduction in daily energy usage, from 97.35 kWh to just 48.09 kWh—a 50% decrease.</p> <p>Cost Efficiency:</p> <p>The reduced energy consumption now saves the business \$650 per month in utility costs.</p>
Example 2.	<p>Case Study - Enhancing Biodiversity at Rivergum Lodge</p>	<p>Ecological Enhancements:</p>



	<p>Problem:</p> <p>Rivergum Lodge borders the Possum Nature Reserve, a 140-hectare protected sanctuary that offers guests a serene escape amidst native bushland and vibrant birdlife. However, human intervention has disrupted the landscape, creating imbalances in the ecosystem. Small bird species such as wrens, wagtails, and honeyeaters struggle to thrive due to a lack of habitat and the dominance of aggressive Noisy Miners. This decline in biodiversity posed a significant challenge to maintaining a balanced and healthy ecosystem.</p> <p>Solution:</p> <p>We commissioned an environmental assessment from local ecologist <i>Tree Wishes</i> to evaluate the history and health of our landscape. The report provided actionable insights into supporting native species and enhancing habitats at Rivergum Lodge.</p> <p>Impact:</p> <p>These actions have significantly enhanced the ecological function of The Woods, creating a more balanced habitat and fostering biodiversity for the benefit of wildlife and guests alike.</p>	<p>Ground Cover: Large logs were added to the landscape to create shelter for small birds and lizards.</p> <p>Pollinator Support: Indigenous plant species such as bees and butterflies were introduced to provide nectar for pollinators.</p> <p>Habitat Layering: Small trees and shrubs were planted to build up the understorey, enrich the soil, and recycle nutrients effectively.</p> <p>Educational Initiative: One of our cabins was renamed <i>Yellowgum</i> to highlight this protected species, and the Guest Manual was updated to include information about its importance and conservation.</p>
Social/Community		
	Provide an example of how the business contributes to or benefits the local community.	What were the outcomes?
	<i>(E.g., supporting local businesses, product packaging, charitable donations, sponsorship, engagement with community groups, supporting local talent, school education and involvement, work experience, support of community fundraising.)</i>	xxx
Example 1.	<p>Driver & Bus Contributions</p> <p>As part of our commitment to community initiatives, we supported the University of Brisbane during their tree-planting days by volunteering both a bus and a driver.</p> <p>Key Contributions:</p> <p>Volunteer Hours: Provided 16 hours of guide time, showcasing our team's dedication to the cause.</p> <p>Transport Support: Donated two days of bus hire to facilitate transportation for participants.</p>	<p>Value of Support:</p> <p>This contribution equates to \$1,800 of in-kind support, demonstrating our active role in fostering sustainability and community engagement.</p>



<p>Example 2.</p>	<p>Empowering Local Youth Through Skill Development</p> <p>Initiative: To support skill development and provide meaningful career pathways, we launched a traineeship and work experience program for local students during the qualifying period.</p> <p>Key Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnered with local high schools and TAFE institutions to identify students interested in hospitality, tourism, and business management. - Hosted two traineeships for Year 12 students, providing hands-on experience in guest services, event coordination, and operations. - Offered work experience placements for three students, allowing them to shadow staff and gain insights into marketing, reservations, and maintenance roles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two trainees completed their placements, with one securing a permanent part-time role in guest services. - Positive feedback from students and schools highlighted increased participant confidence and industry knowledge. <p>Testimonial – April 20XX</p> <p><i>The traineeship at [Your Business Name] was a life-changing experience for me. I gained hands-on guest service experience and learned much about the tourism industry. The team was incredibly supportive, and thanks to this program, I was offered a permanent part-time position!</i></p> <p>— Alex Johnson, Traineeship Graduate and Guest Services Team Member</p>
<p>Economic</p>		
	<p>Provide an example of how the business supports the local economy.</p>	<p>What were the outcomes?</p>
	<p>(E.g., local purchasing, creating job opportunities, promotion of local businesses, support of community funding initiatives, understanding of spend by the business customers to the region/community.)</p>	<p>(E.g. 75% of all our expenses were spent in a particular region)</p>
<p>Example 1.</p>	<p>Supporting the Regional Economy Through Supplier Partnerships</p> <p>We actively contribute to the regional economy by fostering strong partnerships with local and regional businesses to support our tours and operations.</p> <p>Key Contributions in 20XX/XX:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spent \$12,000 with Albany <i>Fresh Produce</i> to source high-quality, locally grown ingredients for guest meals. - Partnered with <i>Coastal Adventures</i> for guided water activities, contributing \$8,000 to their operations. - Utilised 1,500 bed nights at regional accommodation providers to host guests and team members. 	<p>Total Economic Impact:</p> <p>Our total contribution to regional businesses was approximately \$62,000 for the qualifying period, highlighting our role in driving economic growth and supporting local suppliers.</p>
<p>Example 2.</p>	<p>Investing in the Local Workforce</p>	<p>Economic Impact:</p>



	<p>We are proud to support our community by employing local talent, with 95% of our staff residing in the surrounding area. This commitment not only strengthens community ties but also ensures our business reflects the unique character and values of the region.</p>	<p>- \$950k invested into the local economy.</p> <p>- By prioritising local hiring, we provide stable employment opportunities, help retain skilled individuals in the community, and drive economic growth, creating a positive and lasting impact on the region.</p>
Ethical		
	Provide an example of how the business acts ethically throughout its development.	What were the outcomes?
	<i>(E.g., through animal welfare, restoration, procurement, inclusivity, human slavery etc.)</i>	E.g. online reviews improved,
Example 1.	<p>Ethical and Sustainable Guest Amenities</p> <p>We are committed to making ethical choices that benefit both our guests and the environment. All bathroom amenities provided to guests—soap, shampoo, conditioner, and body wash—are locally made on the Sunshine Coast, ensuring they are 100% organic, ethically sourced, and eco-friendly.</p> <p>Key Features of Our Initiative:</p> <p>Ethically Sourced Products: Collaborated with a local supplier that upholds fair trade practices and uses sustainable ingredients.</p> <p>Eco-Friendly Packaging: Amenities are delivered in 20-litre bulk containers crafted from recycled ocean, beach, and landfill plastics, reducing waste and supporting marine conservation.</p> <p>Reusable Bottles: Smaller 1-litre <i>Forever Bottles</i> are installed in guest showers, eliminating single-use plastics and minimising environmental impact.</p>	<p>- Diverted approximately 200 single-use plastic bottles from waste streams during the qualifying period.</p> <p>- Supported local businesses, contributing \$5,000 to the Sunshine Coast economy last year.</p> <p>- Enhanced guest satisfaction by aligning with growing consumer demand for sustainable and ethical products.</p>
Example 2.	<p>Launch of our Wildlife Policy</p> <p>In alignment with our commitment to conservation, we created and launched a comprehensive Wildlife Policy in Oct 20XX. This policy formalises our approach to ensuring responsible interactions with wildlife on our tours and sets clear standards for staff, guests and trade partners.</p> <p>Key Elements of the Policy:</p> <p>Education and Awareness:</p>	<p>- Policy implementation has been embraced by staff and guests, with 90% of surveyed visitors indicating increased awareness of ethical wildlife practices.</p> <p>- Strengthened partnerships with conservation organisations, enhancing our contribution to wildlife protection.</p> <p>- Positioned our business as a leader in ethical tourism, positively impacting our brand reputation and guest satisfaction.</p>

	<p>- Educates guests on appropriate wildlife interactions, including maintaining safe distances and refraining from feeding, touching, or taking selfies with animals.</p> <p>- Installed educational signage and included detailed guidelines in guest manuals and pre-tour briefings.</p> <p>Ethical Marketing Practices:</p> <p>Updated all marketing materials to exclude imagery of close or invasive wildlife interactions, instead showcasing wildlife in their natural habitat observed respectfully.</p> <p>Supplier Standards:</p> <p>Established strict criteria for partnerships, prohibiting collaboration with suppliers or operators involved in unethical wildlife practices, such as caging animals or using them for entertainment purposes.</p>	<p>- We have removed two outsourced experiences that involved unethical practices from our tours.</p>
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Supporting Evidence

Response Guidance

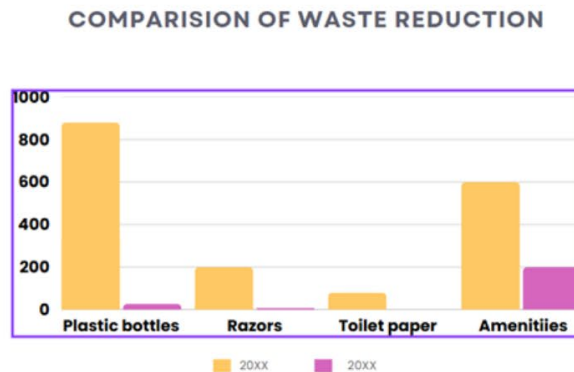
This is where you can include images to support your answer in Q5.1.A [Examples](#) of the type of evidence you can include are:

- *Images of guest participation in cultural programs*
- *Visuals of signage, flyers etc. demonstrating cultural contribution*
- *Images of participation in volunteering activities, community events or other local economic initiatives*
- *Images of water stations, upcycled materials, zero-waste kitchens and other environmentally friendly initiatives*

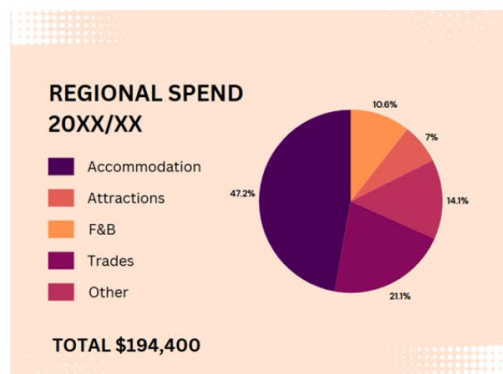
- Include photos of cultural events or partnerships, visitor testimonials, or certification documentation.
- Include photos of waste reduction initiatives and graphs or charts showing reduced usage, i.e., single-use plastics.
- Graphs or charts showing the percentage of spending in the local economy.
- Testimonials from local suppliers or businesses that you support.

- Documentation of collaborative product packaging or visitor referrals.
- Screenshots of marketing materials emphasising ethical wildlife practices or cultural education.
- Testimonials from community members, guests, or stakeholders.

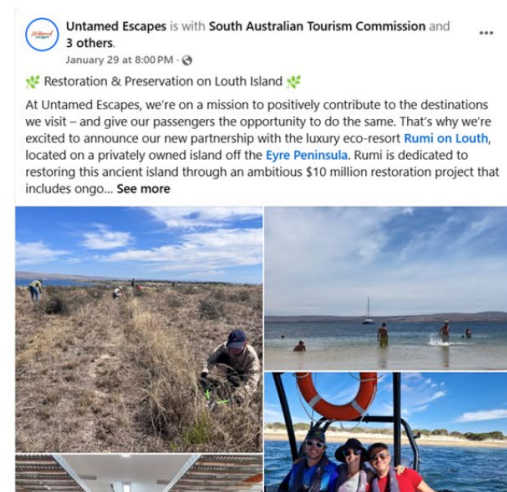
Graph showing waste reduction.



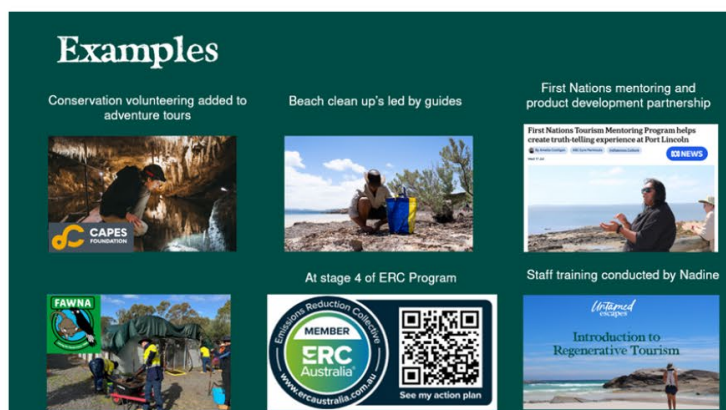
Graph showing regional spend.



Social media post showing conservation work on a tour.



Collage showing environmental initiatives.



6.9 Final Remarks

Question 6

0 points

In 100 words or less, provide any final remarks as to why the business should be considered as a winner in its chosen category.

Response Guidance

Make this a personal response to close out the submission

This is your final opportunity to connect emotionally with the judges and demonstrate why your business is worthy of winning an award. Judges seek a personal, authentic response that conveys why your business stands out in the chosen category.

Consider the following:

- **Use an emotional hook:** Share a memorable story or insight that resonates emotionally with the judges and helps your submission stand out.
- **Be personal:** Write sincerely and passionately to convey your dedication to your business and its values.
- **Stay on point:** Summarise your submission with one or two key points. Avoid including too much information.
- **Be specific:** Mention specific achievements, initiatives, or values that set your business apart.
- **Keep it concise:** Stick to the 100-word limit and use every word purposefully.

EXAMPLE

During our 'Yarn on a Farm' staff training session, a Wadawurrung Traditional Owner shared that Indigenous tribes had no concept of ownership, only a deep connection to place. His next words gave me goosebumps:

"Our people relied on what was around them to feel connected and at home."

That is our exact mantra, only 40,000 years later.

"To create a personalised travel experience where guests leave feeling connected to nature, beautiful spaces, and our local region."

This timeless link makes our mission even more meaningful.

And on that note, *Nyatne* and *Gobata*.

Thank you and take care.

SECTION 7. NEARLY THERE – BEFORE YOU SUBMIT

Check the below are correct before you submit your entry for this year's Tourism Awards:

- Nomination Details – Name of establishment/ event/ campaign
- Web/social media URL links
- **Establishment/ Event/ Campaign name**
 - Review the name you have added under the establishment/event/campaign field.
 - **Important:** The name entered in this field will be the name used in the printed program, in announcements, trophies, certificates, etc.
- **Web/social media URL links**
 - The below links are used by judges to conduct the online review component of your entry.

Please supply any of the following URLs your establishment/event might have

Website	Facebook
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Twitter	Instagram
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Pinterest	Google Url
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
TripAdvisor	
<input type="text"/>	
Booking.com	
<input type="text"/>	

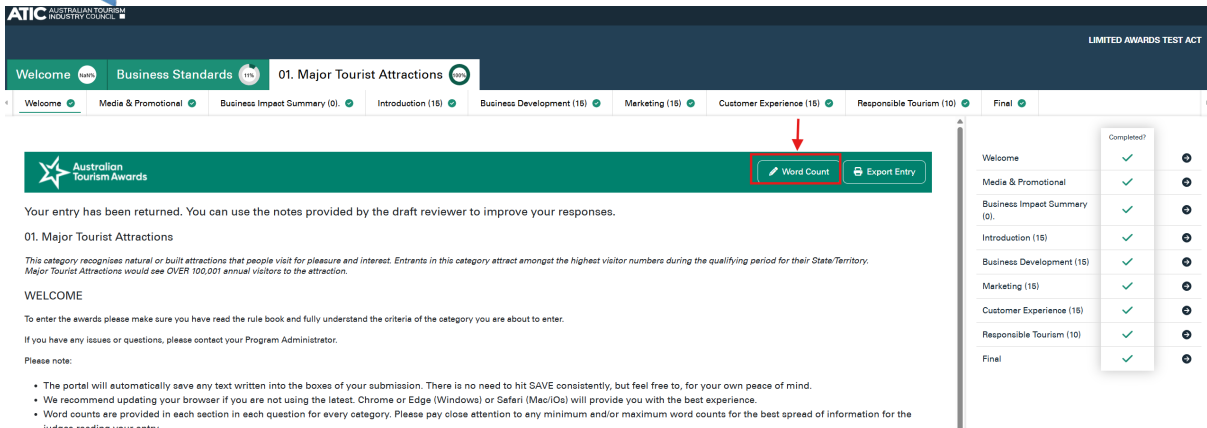
- Images
 - Images within your submission are **clear and legible** – the way you see your images in the portal will be the same for the judges. If the image is not clear for you, or if you can't read the content within the image (in case of charts, infographics, etc.), judges won't either.
 - Have been uploaded under the correct question – under each question, you will see an upload button for images (see marked in red below). Ensure the images uploaded in each are correct and relevant to that question.
 - Have captions up to 10 words.

Word count & images allowance

NOTE: For North Coast Regional Tourism Awards the maximum word count is 5,000 words.

Check your word count and images to ensure you are not over the limit – refer to the screenshot below to see where you can review these.

- The portal won't allow you to submit your entry if you are over the limit.



ATIC AUSTRALIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY COUNCIL LIMITED AWARDS TEST ACT

Welcome **0%** Business Standards **10%** 01. Major Tourist Attractions **0%**

Welcome Media & Promotional Business Impact Summary (0) Introduction (16) Business Development (16) Marketing (16) Customer Experience (16) Responsible Tourism (10) Final

Australian Tourism Awards Word Count Export Entry

Your entry has been returned. You can use the notes provided by the draft reviewer to improve your responses.

01. Major Tourist Attractions

This category recognises natural or built attractions that people visit for pleasure and interest. Entrants in this category attract amongst the highest visitor numbers during the qualifying period for their State/Territory. Major Tourist Attractions would see OVER 100,001 annual visitors to the attraction.

WELCOME

To enter the awards please make sure you have read the rule book and fully understand the criteria of the category you are about to enter.

If you have any issues or questions, please contact your Program Administrator.

Please note:

- The portal will automatically save any text written into the boxes of your submission. There is no need to hit SAVE consistently, but feel free to, for your own peace of mind.
- We recommend updating your browser if you are not using the latest. Chrome or Edge (Windows) or Safari (Mac/iOs) will provide you with the best experience.
- Word counts are provided in each section in each question for every category. Please pay close attention to any minimum and/or maximum word counts for the best spread of information for the judges reading your entry.

	Completed?
Welcome	✓
Media & Promotional	✓
Business Impact Summary (0)	✓
Introduction (16)	✓
Business Development (16)	✓
Marketing (16)	✓
Customer Experience (16)	✓
Responsible Tourism (10)	✓
Final	✓

Grammar and spelling

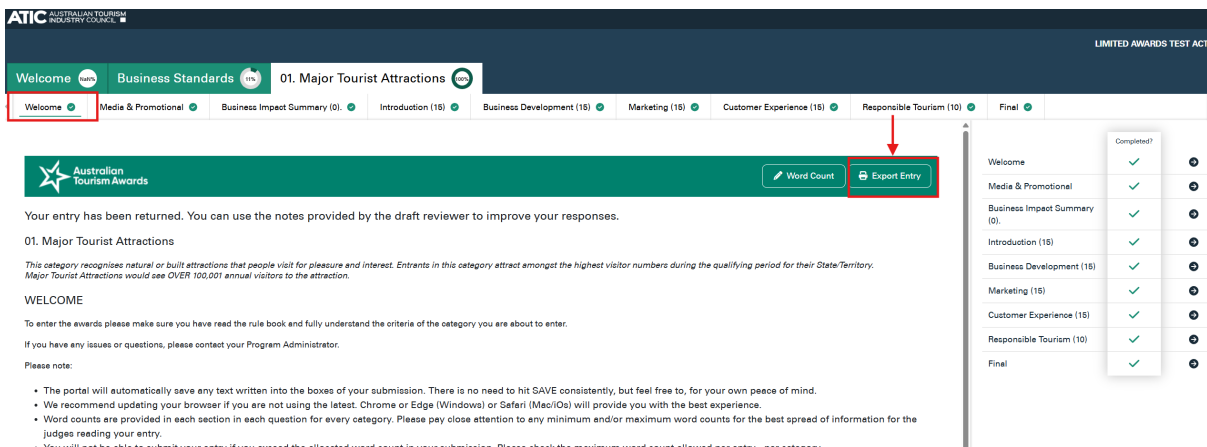
Judges expect a professionally written submission free from errors. What can help:

Consider downloading Grammarly – it's a free app and will help you with spelling and grammar.

Get someone to proof-read your submission before the deadline. When we are too involved in preparing a submission, it's hard to pick up these mistakes so an external person always helps.

Download a copy of your submission

Export and save a copy of your submission for your own record – see marked in red below. Please note this will only export the written answers (not the images).



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- You will not be able to submit your entry if you exceed the allocated word count in your submission. Please check the maximum word count allowed per entry - not category.

	Completed?
Welcome	✓
Media & Promotional	✓
Business Impact Summary (0)	✓
Introduction (16)	✓
Business Development (16)	✓
Marketing (16)	✓
Customer Experience (16)	✓
Responsible Tourism (10)	✓
Final	✓