Perth Airport
Western Australian Tourism Awards
2025

Australian Tourism Awards

JUDGES GUIDE

CULTURAL TOURISM CATEGORY

2025 AWARDS.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME TO THE JUDGING PANEL

Thank you for being part of the judging panel for the 2025 Tourism Awards. Your time, expertise, and commitment are instrumental in recognising and celebrating excellence across our tourism industry. This guide has been developed to assist you in evaluating submissions fairly and consistently, aligned with the guidance provided to entrants.

The judging process is more than just scoring — it is about identifying the businesses and experiences that exemplify best practice, innovation, and leadership in our industry. This year's guide is aligned with the Entrants Guide for Standard Categories 2025, ensuring judges are equipped with the same context, definitions, and expectations as those entering.

Thank you for your support.

JUDGES RESPONSIBILITIES

The purpose of your role as a judge is:

- To ensure a fair and objective assessment of each entry in the Western Australian Tourism Awards program.
- To become an ambassador for the WA Tourism Awards and Australian Tourism Awards

The purpose of the judging process is to provide:

- Fair, impartial and complete assessment of each entry
- Determination of the ranking of the submissions in each category
    - NOTE: The Consumer Rating (GRI) and Digital Reviews scores will be added on completion of submission judging to determine the final Gold, Silver and Bronze winners.

STRUCTURE OF THE JUDGING PANEL

Each year, a panel of approximately 27 WA-based judges, plus a Chair of Judges, is appointed to assess submissions in the Western Australian Tourism Awards.

Elements of the judging panel are:

- Three judges are required to review and score each category.
- Prior to allocation of judging teams, conflicts by category and by entrant need to be checked and documented.
- Ideally judges should not judge the same category over consecutive years,

where possible.
- Judges are not aware of the other judges on their panel, and will only meet at deliberation day.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST/CONFIDENTIALITY FORMS

You will be required to complete a Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Form. These forms are used to:

- Remind judges that conflicts may be present and encourage them to carefully review their position.
- Assist in the allocation of categories for judging
- Remind judges that both the submissions they are assessing contain confidential information and that the outcomes of the judging process are strictly confidential.

PERCEIVED BIAS

If a review of scores by the Auditor reveals that there are scoring anomalies that may be perceived as a bias, they must raise this with the Chair of Judges. The Chair will discuss this with the judge/s concerned. If the scoring has had an impact on the winner of the Category – the Chair will deem the appropriate action to be taken being from the following;

- Appoint another judge to re-judge the whole category again, this score will be added to the other two judges' scores.
- Appoint another judge and average the four scores or appoint a new three-person panel to re-judge.

ELIGIBILITY

It is the judge's responsibility to notify the Chair of Judges if there is a belief that a submission is ineligible prior to close of judging. The Chair of Judges will make a final ruling on the eligibility of an entry.

DELIBERATION

The purpose of deliberation is for the judging panel to discuss and deliberate on the merits of a submission. The result of the deliberation is to have a ranking of those whose submission is deemed worthy of winning gold. However, the application of a consumer rating (GRI) score and digital review may result in changes to the final ranking. Therefore, it is important that the judges consider whether the need for a further gap between submission score placings is required.

SCORES THAT RESULT IN A TIE

The Auditor will advise the Chair of Judges of a tie between the first and second place following independent reading and scoring by the team of three judges and application of the consumer rating (GRI) and digital review, resulting in the following:

1. Step 1 – Judging team review and discuss perceptions with Chair of Judges and alter submission score where agreed. Note: There is not a requirement for a judge to alter their scores, even if they do not align with the other judges. The purpose of this process to be independently judged, and if a consensus cannot be reached there are other steps that can be taken.
2. Step 2 – If there is no change to the score and it remains tied, submissions automatically go to a second judging team for assessment. Nationally, the second judging team should not include a judge from the States/Territories of the tied submissions.
3. Step 3 - on the third judging (if it reaches that point) judges will be instructed to judge question against question from each of the nominations, rather than whole submission against whole submission.
4. Step 4 - If after the third judging they are still too close to call, then the total of all the three panels' scores will be tallied and applied as a collective score.
5. Step 5 - If after that they are still too close to call, a genuine tie is declared.

LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT

At the national level there are the following recognised levels of achievement

- Winner (Gold) - Entrant attaining the highest score (consisting of their written submission, consumer rating (GRI) and digital review) in that category
- Hall of Fame - Entrant that has won the same category over 3 consecutive years
- Silver - Runner up to Winner (Gold)
- Bronze - Third placed entrant.

Hall of Fame

Once a Hall of Fame has been won at the national level the entrant may not re-enter in the same category at the state/territory level for the following two consecutive years.*

** Note: The entrant may enter other categories*

A Hall of Fame winner will receive the standard 'winners' trophy in year one and two of their win. On the third consecutive win they will receive special recognition during the Awards ceremony and a Hall of Fame trophy.

Winners in the Hall of Fame will be actively promoted along with the winners in any publications and ceremonies.

If a business wins three years in a row in the Excellence in Local Government Award for Tourism, receiving the Hall of Fame accolade, they are disqualified from entering that category for two years.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chair of Judges

The Chair of Judges (Chair) should be someone who is well known, has strong leadership skills and preferably has awards experience as either a judge or entrant.

The Chair should not be a member of the current State/Territory judging panel.

The role of the Chair is one of moderator to facilitate the judging process.

The Chair is not directly involved in assessing submissions but serves to provide guidance to judging teams and resolve problems by brokering a final decision.

Tourism Council WA and the Chair are responsible for ensuring all judges are briefed in the requirements of the Judging Process.

Particular elements of this briefing should include:

- A reminder that the awards are submission based, and that prior knowledge of an entrant should not be considered as part of the judging process
- Navigation and log-in procedures for the awards online portal
- Management of disputes
- Clarification of the roles of the Chair of Judges, Independent Auditor and Awards Coordinator
- Confirmation of forms requiring completion.
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Independent Auditor

The perceived quality of the judging process underpins the way in which the

tourism awards are regarded. The appointment of an Independent Auditor (Auditor) must be completely transparent. Qualities/skills necessary to be appointed as auditor include:

- Skilled in auditing
- The ability to remain completely independent of all entrants
- A sound knowledge of the tourism industry
- The ability to commit time to the auditing process.

The role of the Auditor is to:

- Review judging decisions, especially scoring
- Assist the Chair of Judges resolve conflicts amongst members of judging teams
- Oversee the final recommendations made by the Judging Panel.

At a minimum the Auditor's responsibilities include:

- Attending the deliberation day/s
- Working with the Awards Coordinator to review submissions for compliance and eligibility with reference to the Judging rules
- Reviewing the individual and aggregate scoring sheets to ensure all marked questions are scored and that the score sheet tallies are verified
- Providing a written statement that can be reprinted in the Program or other communication devices about the probity of the process

Judges

The perceived quality of the judging process underpins the way in which the tourism awards are regarded. The appointment of judges must be completely transparent and the rigours of the judging process clearly and openly communicated to quell concerns about the judging process.

Judging panels must be reflective and representative of the industry. Leading tourism and business people should be invited to sit on the panels.

Judges are appointed based on the following attributes:

- Strong knowledge of the operations of the tourism industry
- Involvement at a senior management level in the tourism industry or a similar service industry
- Understand the need for and benefits that derive from a strategic business plan and responsible for the implementation of same
- Is aware of the trends in consumer marketing and online and offline distribution

- Strong financial management and the ability to identify potential commercial success
- Is aware of Work Health and Safety and other legislative requirements and how they impact a business
- Is prepared to commit time to the judging process and become an ambassador for the program

Awards Coordinator

The Awards Coordinator works with the Chair of Judges in the allocation of Judging Teams and coordination of the Judges Briefing. This role is responsible for:

- Ensuring all State/Territory winners are marked accordingly in the online portal
- Managing and distributing log-in details for the online portal
- Distributing category allocation for Judges
- Working with the Auditor to review submissions for compliance and eligibility with reference to the Judging rules
- Ensuring all judges have signed Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Agreement forms which are to be held by the Awards Coordinator.

SCORING & ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The following provides a framework to assist the judge in reviewing and applying their scores.

- **Each question is scored independently** based on the number of points allocated.
- **Submissions are judged on both content and evidence** — this includes visuals, data, testimonials, and examples.
- **Points to Consider:** vague claims, repeated content, lack of measurement, and off-topic responses.
- **Word count is monitored in the awards portal** — text in images does not count, however any text in graphics/images must support content provided in the written submission. The submission should still make sense without them and no new written content should be introduced through images, See below for more information on rules around the word count.
- **Each submission may include up to 30 pieces of visual evidence** across all questions.

- **Good grammar is important,** but should not be the sole basis of a business ranking low when they have demonstrated sound leadership, creativity and excellence in tourism.

Refer to the checklist/rubric at the end of each question for scoring consistency.

WORD COUNT

If a business deliberately combines words by removing spaces (e.g.BusinessPlan) or using a symbol (e.g. &, -,/ Product&Experience, Retail-Store), and it is found to be a deliberate trend throughout their submission, up to 5 points can be deducted from the total score, with the judge to determine the number of points to be deducted.

a. The use of a hyphen (-) where appropriate or commonly used will be accepted e.g. e-commerce, year-on-year.
b. Deliberate means combining words in this manner more than 5 times per submission, and for combinations of more than three words, with the intent of reducing word count.

Images

Entrants are advised that they can use a total of 30 images across their whole submission.

The following is a summary of image guidelines are provided to entrants:

01. Both .JPG and .PNG are allowed.
02. Uploads cannot be larger than 10MB. If uploading multiple files at the same time, a collective 10MB limit will apply.
03. Images can be infographics, charts, graphs, photographs and collages.
04. It is crucial that all images are clear and legible.
05. Use images that have high resolution – ensure they are not pixelated.
06. 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.
07. Make sure all images are relevant to the submission, and to each of the questions they are under.
08. Any image used must be for the sole purpose of supporting the submission by providing evidence.
09. 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.

10. 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.
11. **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.
12. 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.
13. If you choose to have a testimonial as an image, ensure that the written content of the image is clear and legible.
14. **Captions** – when uploading your images into the portal, you need to give them a ten-word caption.

AI Assistance

Entrants are advised that:

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.

Therefore, entrants should not be penalised if they seek the assistance of programs such as AI, but the scoring & assessment framework rules would still apply.

GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING STANDARD CATEGORIES

The following information is provided as a benchmark for assessing award submissions. This is based on the standard categories (those that do not have an individual question set).

For information on how to navigate the online awards portal this SCRIBE will provide step by step instructions.

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF BUSINESS

Question 1.1 **5 points**

A. Provide an overview of the Cultural Tourism business and/or cultural tourism offering.
B. Provide visual evidence to support your answer.

Judging Focus: This is the business's chance to introduce themselves and provide a clear overview of their tourism product or experience that aligns with cultural tourism. It is the only question where businesses may refer to their full history, with all others requiring a focus on the qualifying period.

What Entrants Were Told: Entrants were advised to use storytelling and brand personality to highlight their business journey, key products and services, location, team, and point of difference. They were encouraged to use subheadings, tables, and visuals. A map and hero image were suggested to show location and style. This was their opportunity to establish alignment with the Cultural Tourism category and set the context for judges.

Judge Expectations:

- Clear understanding of the nature of the business and what it offers.
- Description of the business's cultural tourism products/experiences/services.
- Strong alignment to cultural tourism (e.g. focus could be on history, art, heritage, or community).
- Indication of where and how the product/service is delivered.
- Mention of business evolution and development.
- Brand personality and tone appropriate to tourism.
- Logical flow and structure (e.g., subheadings or storytelling).
- Visuals are high quality and relevant.
- Evidence supports key statements made in Q1.1.
- Captions or descriptions are provided. Captions are 10 words max, if 10 words are exceeded the additional words are counted in their word count automatically.

Higher Scored Response Include:

- Business location is clearly explained (with/without map)
- Business offering is clearly described
- Point of difference is evident
- Category relevance is clear (e.g., prominent cultural tourism offering)

- Business history or evolution is included
- Team size and structure is provided (ideally with org chart or description)
- Visual evidence is relevant and supports the written content
- Visuals reinforce or enhance written submission

Lower Scored Response Include:

- Generic business descriptions lacking category relevance.
- Lack of alignment to entered category.
- No mention of cultural elements, values, or partnerships.
- Visuals provided without explanation.
- Use of imagery to replace rather than support written content.
- Unclear or poor-quality images.

SECTION 2: CULTURAL RESPONSIBILITY	
Question 2.1	**15 points**
A. Provide 2-4 examples of how the business connects visitors with culture. B. Provide visual evidence to support your answer.	

Judge Focus

This question seeks to evaluate how well a tourism business facilitates meaningful, respectful, and authentic connections between visitors and culture. Judges should focus on the depth of engagement, the authenticity of cultural representation, and the impact of these activities on both visitors and the culture being represented.

Look for responses that go beyond surface-level descriptions and show a genuine commitment to cultural stewardship. Prioritise examples where cultural custodians or community representatives have actively contributed to the design or delivery of the visitor experience. Consider whether the business is enhancing appreciation of culture and protecting cultural heritage, not just using it as a marketing feature.

What Entrants Were Told

Entrants were asked to provide 2–4 examples of how their business connects visitors with culture. This includes describing activities that represent cultural aspects (such as history, heritage, Indigenous culture, arts, etc.), explaining how the activity preserves or builds awareness of culture, demonstrating authenticity through collaboration with local communities or cultural custodians, and stating measurable outcomes from these efforts. Visual evidence is also required.

Judge Expectations

Judges should assess whether the business:

- Demonstrates a clear, respectful, and meaningful connection between visitors and cultural elements (e.g. history, art, Indigenous practices, local heritage).
- Provides examples of *activities or experiences* that protect, celebrate, or sustain culture.
- Shows collaboration with cultural custodians, traditional owners, local communities or cultural groups to ensure authenticity.
- Presents measurable outcomes that show how their efforts positively impacted cultural preservation or awareness (e.g. visitor feedback, increased community involvement).
- Includes relevant and compelling visual evidence to enhance credibility and storytelling.
- Avoids tokenistic or generic mentions of culture without a clear connection to visitor experience.

Encourage judges to consider how the activities align with the purpose of the Cultural Tourism category: fostering greater understanding and appreciation of culture.

Higher Scored Responses Include

- Clearly described examples (2–4) that demonstrate deep cultural engagement and visitor connection.
- Authentic collaboration with cultural stakeholders or community custodians.
- Diverse representation of culture (e.g. Indigenous, local history, arts).
- Strong cultural preservation practices (e.g. limiting site access, reinvestment in preservation).
- Tangible outcomes supported by data or qualitative feedback (e.g. visitor numbers, satisfaction, conservation achievements).
- Relevant and rich visual evidence, such as participant photos, testimonials, or educational signage.

Lower Scored Responses Include

- Vague or superficial descriptions of how culture is represented.

- Limited or no demonstration of collaboration with cultural custodians.
- General activities that lack specific outcomes or impact.
- Minimal explanation of how culture is preserved or promoted.
- No clear link between the visitor experience and the culture being presented.
- Lack of visual evidence, or visuals that do not substantiate the written examples.

Question 2.2	**15 points**
A. Provide 2-4 examples of how the business educates visitors and local communities to broaden their cultural understanding or participation. B. Provide visual evidence to support your answer.	

Judging Focus:

This question evaluates how the business educates visitors through culturally informed interpretation and storytelling.

What Entrants Were Told:

Entrants were to provide 2–4 examples of how they interpret and share culture with visitors. This could include storytelling, guided tours, exhibitions, or installations. Entries should include rationale, delivery method, and any feedback received.

Judge Expectations:

- Content must reflect cultural accuracy and be approved by those represented.
- Visuals should reinforce educational content.
- Interpretation should enhance visitor understanding.
- May be delivered digitally, face-to-face, or through materials.
- Avoid marketing claims disguised as interpretation.

Higher Scored Response Include:

- How the interpretation was co-developed or led by cultural custodians.
- Educational tools used are engaging and reflective.
- Measurable visitor understanding or behaviour change.
- Testimonials or learning outcomes from participants.
- Visuals showing storytelling in context (e.g. tours, talks).
- Clear connection between cultural stories and visitor value.

Lower Scored Response Include:

- Cultural content delivered without consent (if relevant).
- Generalised interpretation lacking context or accuracy.
- Visuals not related to educational activity.
- No clarity on who delivers the interpretation.
- Claims without evidence of accuracy or origin.
- Content lacking depth or ethical consideration.
- Visuals provided without explanation.
- Use of imagery to replace rather than support written content.
- Unclear or poor-quality images.

SECTION 3: EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS & PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Question 3.1	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.	

Judging Focus:

This question is designed to showcase how the business has planned and implemented strategic improvements during the qualifying period. Judges are assessing strategic thinking, alignment with goals, and measurable outcomes.

What Entrants Were Told:

Entrants were guided to provide 3–5 improvements with clear rationale, specific goals, and measurable outcomes. Suggestions included new products, tech upgrades, system changes, staff development, and guest-focused initiatives.

Judge Expectations:

- 3–5 improvement activities included.
- Improvements are relevant to operations or product offering.
- The improvement demonstrated leadership, strategic thinking and/or provided value to the broader tourism industry.
- Each improvement is clearly explained and well structured.
- Specific goals are defined for each improvement.
- Rationale provided, with links to research or internal analysis.
- Outcomes are measurable and reported.
- Visual evidence matches narrative and supports claims.

Higher Scored Response Include:

- 3–5 improvements included
    - NOTE: More does not always equal better.
- Clear rationale provided for each improvement
- Specific goals for each improvement are defined
- Outcomes are measurable and align with goals
- Learnings and impacts are shared
- Visuals reinforce written responses

Lower Scored Response Include:

- Vague descriptions without measurable results.
- Lack of connection between goal and outcome.
- Repetition from other questions (ensure unique content).
- Improvements outside the qualifying period.
- Visuals provided without explanation.
- Use of imagery to replace rather than support written content.
- Unclear or poor-quality images.

SECTION 4: EXCELLENCE IN MARKETING	
Question 4.1	**5 points**
A. Provide an overview of the business's target markets. B. Provide visual evidence to support your answer.	

Judging Focus:
This question assesses the business's understanding of its customers and its ability to strategically define and reach specific market segments.

What Entrants Were Told:
Entrants were encouraged to profile 2–3 key target markets, describing who they are, where they're from, their behaviours and motivations, and how the business is tailored to their needs. Use of visuals and data (e.g. booking sources, demographics) was recommended.

Judge Expectations:

- 2–3 well-defined target markets.
- Clear segmentation: demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioural traits.
- Evidence of how the product or experience is tailored to these markets.
- Justification through internal/external research and/or customer data.

- Visuals are used effectively (infographics, charts, personas).

Higher Scored Response Include:

- 2–3 target markets clearly identified
- Segments well defined and described
- Tailoring of products/services is explained
- Evidence supports market identification (surveys, analytics, insights)
- Visuals reinforce understanding of markets

Lower Scored Response Include:

- Generic or overlapping audience profiles.
- No explanation of why the market was selected.
- Vague or unsupported assumptions.
- Visuals provided without explanation.
- Use of imagery to replace rather than support written content.
- Unclear or poor-quality images.

Question 4.2	**10 points**
A. Provide 2-3 examples of marketing strategies implemented during the qualifying period, along with their outcomes. B. Provide visual evidence to support your answer.	

Judging Focus:
This question highlights how businesses planned, executed, and evaluated marketing activities that reached their target audiences and delivered results.

What Entrants Were Told:
Entrants were encouraged to provide a mix of digital, trade, PR, or campaign-based initiatives. Each strategy should include objectives, target market, activity, rationale, alignment to plans, and measurable outcomes.

Judge Expectations:

- 3–5 examples of distinct strategies.
- Each includes objective, activity, rationale, and result.
- Strategy aligns with one or more markets from Q4.1.
- Connection to regional/state/national plans if applicable.
- Measurable results and clear learnings.

- Strategies demonstrated leadership, strategic thinking and went beyond standard business marketing strategies.
- Visuals support understanding (e.g. screenshots, charts, campaign assets).

Higher Scored Response Include:

- 2-3 strategies outlined
    - NOTE: More does not always equal better.
- Objectives and rationale clearly explained
- Activities described and aligned to objectives
- Target markets from Q4.1 are referenced
- Strategy aligns with broader destination marketing plans
- Measurable outcomes are included
- Visuals demonstrate execution and/or results

Lower Scored Response Include:

- Outcomes not linked to stated objectives.
- Overlap with operational improvements in Q3.1.
- No evidence of data to support claims.
- Visuals provided without explanation.
- Use of imagery to replace rather than support written content.
- Unclear or poor-quality images.

SECTION 5: EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE	
Question 5.1	**10 points**
A. What initiatives has the business put in place during the qualifying period to deliver excellent customer service throughout the visitor journey? B. Provide visual evidence to support your answer.	

Judging Focus:
This question explores initiatives that elevate the customer experience from booking to post-visit.

What Entrants Were Told:
Entrants were encouraged to show 2-4 examples across the visitor journey (pre, during, post), and explain the influence, investment and outcomes of each. Evidence of staff training, new systems, SOPs, and feedback processes were also encouraged.

Judge Expectations:

- 2-4 unique examples directly related to customer service.
- Actions are clearly described and outcomes measured.
- Examples go beyond standard practices.
- Feedback and continuous improvement processes are shown.
- Visual evidence relevant and informative.

Higher Scored Response Include:

- 2-4 customer service examples provided
    - NOTE: More does not always equal better.
- Stages of the visitor journey are represented
- Rationale and investment for each example provided
- Measurable results are included
- Visuals support customer service initiatives

Lower Scored Response Include:

- Duplication with Q3.1 improvements.
- Examples not linked to visitor outcomes.
- Vague discussion of "great service" without proof.
- Visuals provided without explanation.
- Use of imagery to replace rather than support written content.
- Unclear or poor-quality images.

Question 5.2	**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.	

Judging Focus:
This question recognises how businesses are working to make their experience more inclusive and accessible to all visitors.

What Entrants Were Told:
Entrants were encouraged to consider physical, social, cultural, and digital aspects of their business. Examples could include accessible design, cultural engagement, sensory-friendly offerings, dietary adjustments, or LGBTIQ+ practices. Case studies and testimonials were suggested.

Judge Expectations:

- 2–5 examples of inclusive practice.
- Evidence of proactive planning and delivery.
- Tailoring for diverse needs.
- Rationale and outcomes are explained.
- Visual evidence or testimonials provided.

Higher Scored Response Include:

- Inclusion practices tailored to visitor needs
- Multiple access or inclusion examples included
- Rationale, investment, or planning is evident
- Clear benefits or outcomes identified
- Visuals/testimonials are used effectively

Lower Scored Response Include:

- Use of accessibility as a compliance-only task.
- No evidence of understanding of diverse visitor needs.
- Generic statements without proof.
- Visuals provided without explanation.
- Use of imagery to replace rather than support written content.
- Unclear or poor-quality images

SECTION 6: SUSTAINABLE & RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

For information on how to score the Sustainable and Responsible Achievement section this SCRIBE will provide step by step instructions.

Question 6.1	**3 points**
A. What efforts have been made in the qualifying period towards responsible and sustainable business practices? B. Provide visual evidence to support your answer.	

Judging Focus:
This question assesses the environmental, social, cultural, economic and ethical contributions of the business.

What Entrants Were Told:
Entrants were encouraged to show examples across five pillars: cultural, environmental, social, economic and ethical. Examples must include outcomes and demonstrate alignment with values and tourism responsibility.

Judge Expectations:

- Examples across multiple sustainability pillars (1-2 total).
- Clear description of activity and outcomes.
- Actions align with responsible tourism values.
- Evidence of planning or integration across business.
- Visuals validate and support written response.

Higher Scored Response Include:

- 1-2 sustainability or responsibility examples
- Measurable or observed outcomes included
- Alignment with responsible tourism is evident
- Visuals reinforce and support narrative

Lower Scored Response Include:

- General environmental statements with no data.
- Vague values without supporting action.
- Duplicated examples from earlier sections.
- Visuals provided without explanation.
- Use of imagery to replace rather than support written content.
- Unclear or poor-quality images

SECTION 7: FINAL REMARKS

(No points allocated – included for narrative support)
In 100 words or less, provide any final remarks as to why the business should be considered as a winner in its chosen category.

Judging Focus:
This question is not assessed, but is an opportunity for the business to close out their submission.

Judge Expectations:

- A compelling closing statement aligned to the overall submission.
- Highlights the business's overall strengths or standout features.
- Reinforces category relevance and industry contribution.

Higher Response Includes:

- Provides a strong and cohesive conclusion
- Aligns with earlier content
- Reinforces standout strengths

Lower Response Includes:

- Summary does not match the tone or facts of submission.
- Brings in new activity not included in previous questions.

FEEDBACK

The benefits of entering the awards extend beyond winning. The Australian Tourism Awards program is also designed to be a valuable planning and development tool that forces entrants to put their businesses under the microscope.

By entering the awards, entrants automatically go through a rigorous self-analysis process that helps to evaluate their operational activities over the course of a defined qualifying period.

As part of the judging process, you are required to provide constructive feedback that will:

- assist the applicant to understand their score/result,
- point out areas of non-compliance,
- provide praise and recognition for a job well done,
- highlight areas that were more or less competitive or areas for improvement,
- motivate and inspire them to continue to strive for excellence,
- provide guidance with the preparation of future tourism award submissions, and
- encourage more strategic business planning and evaluation processes.

Remember that your feedback is a comment on the information in the submission and IS NOT a comment on the overall business activities. Effective feedback will contribute to the transparency and accountability of the judging which instils greater confidence in the fairness of the process. It also helps

validate the integrity and credibility of the Australian Tourism Awards program as the benchmark for tourism excellence.

Feedback should be expressed in a positive way and in a tone that encourages improved performance through the provision of constructive advice. Make sure your comments are easy to understand, relevant, non-judgemental and specific. Most importantly, show compassion and be sensitive to the emotional impact of your feedback.

Samples of Feedback

‘This answer could be enhanced through the inclusion of additional detail on your services…’

‘It would be beneficial to understand in dollar terms your contribution to the region….’

‘Additional detail in relation to who your actual competitors are would be useful here…’

‘It would be beneficial to see quantifiable goals that we can relate to the actual outcomes…’

‘This answer may be enhanced through the use of a table or matrix…’

‘It would be useful to see a broader approach to business goals… it may be beneficial to include x, y and z….’

‘This answer would be improved through the use of a broader range of tools to show viability eg. average spend etc….’

‘It would be advantageous for you to rank the risks in relation to their impact on your business..’‘It would be valuable to understand your personal involvement and contribution to the industry..’

‘It would be helpful to breakdown your target markets by proportion or % of total business…’

‘Further segmentation of your target markets would be valuable…’

‘This answer would be enhanced through relating your strategies to each target audience more clearly…’

‘The use of a matrix or table may enhance the presentation of this information….’

‘Clearer identification of your unique selling propositions would enhance this answer…. detail what makes you different….’

‘Consider all aspects of your communications when answering this question on accuracy ie. staff training, website, brochures, imagery etc….’

‘It would be useful to understand your philosophy in relation to customer service here…details of your feedback processes would be valuable….’

‘This answer would be enhanced through additional detail in relation to staff training etc…’

‘Expand the detail in relation to specific needs…. this relates to any special request you may have… evaluate in relation to your target markets….’

‘Additional detail in relation to professional developments processes would be advantageous here… consider your staff development programs and how you measure them….’

‘It would be beneficial to understand the practical environmental initiatives you have in place for…..’

‘How you measure your commitment in terms of water saving, energy saving etc would be a valuable way to expand the detail in this answer….’

‘It would be useful for you to quantify your contribution to the community in terms of wages and goods and services….’

‘Ensure that you explain the benefit of your new innovations in terms of …….’