



A graphic consisting of three overlapping triangles in orange, yellow, and red, positioned to the left of the text.

MACLEAY VALLEY
BUSINESS
AWARDS 2025

HANDBOOK

GALA AWARDS DINNER
Saturday 21st June 2025

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www.macleaybusinesschamber.com.au

OUR MISSION

To support and build members of the Macleay Valley Business Chamber and attract new and diverse enterprises.

CONTENTS

<i>Awards Process and Timeline</i>	3
<i>Awards Categories</i>	4
<i>Conditions of Entry</i>	7
<i>How to Enter the Awards</i>	8
<i>Awards Application Questions – Local Recognition Awards:</i>	10
1. <i>Excellence in Tourism, Accommodation & Hospitality</i>	
2. <i>Excellence in Health, Beauty & Well Being</i>	
3. <i>Excellence in Retail Service</i>	
4. <i>Excellence in Professional Services - Less than 20 employees</i>	
5. <i>Excellence in Professional Services - More than 21 employees</i>	
6. <i>Excellence in Trades and Industry</i>	
7. <i>Excellence in Agriculture</i>	
<i>Awards Application Questions – NSW Chamber Aligned Awards:</i>	12
1. <i>Outstanding Employee</i>	
2. <i>Outstanding Young Business Leader - 35 year and under</i>	
3. <i>Outstanding Business Leader - 20 employees and under</i>	
4. <i>Outstanding Business Leader - 21 employees and over</i>	
5. <i>Employer of Choice – Under 20 Employees</i>	
6. <i>Employer of Choice – Over 20 Employees</i>	
7. <i>Excellence in Innovation</i>	
8. <i>Excellence in Sustainability</i>	
9. <i>Outstanding Community Organisation</i>	
10. <i>Outstanding Visitor Experience – Regional Only</i>	
11. <i>Outstanding New Business</i>	
12. <i>Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion</i>	
13. <i>Excellence in Micro Business - Less than 5 employees</i>	
14. <i>Excellence in Small Business - 5-20 employees</i>	
15. <i>Excellence in Business - 21 employees or more</i>	
<i>Summary of types of businesses eligible for each Local Award Category</i>	29

AWARDS PROCESS AND TIMELINE

APRIL 9 | ENTRIES OPEN • GALA TICKETS ON SALE

APRIL 23 | WORKSHOP 1 @ COASTLINE BANK

MAY 7 | WORKSHOP 2 @ COASTLINE BANK

MAY 14 | ENTRIES CLOSE 12pm

MAY 21 | VOTING OPENS 9am

JUNE 4 | VOTING CLOSES 5pm

JUNE 21 | **GALA DINNER**

For Entry, Voting & tickets go to:

macleayvalleychamber.com.au

AWARD CATEGORIES

The Macleay Valley Business Awards provides an exceptional opportunity to recognise and reward amazing businesses whose passion, determination and success inspire other businesses and business people.

The Macleay Valley Business Awards are about more than just winning. They are the perfect opportunity for entrants to take a fresh look at their operation and have it assessed by experts. The process of completing an award application helps you to review your performance and think about your future plans.

This Handbook outlines the award categories and explains how to apply. All entries are to be completed online at www.macleayvalleychamber.com.au

There are two distinct Award Levels available:

LOCAL RECOGNITION AWARDS

All Entrants MUST enter one of the Local Recognition Awards.

Entrants can enter only ONE Local Recognition Awards. A list of the types of businesses who are eligible for each category is included in this Handbook.

EXCELLENCE AWARDS ALIGNED TO THE NSW BUSINESS CHAMBER

Entrants are encouraged to enter one of the NSW Business Chamber Aligned Awards.

Businesses and organisations can enter into more than one category of the NSW Business Chamber Aligned Awards.

*Celebrating
Local
Business
Success*

LOCAL RECOGNITION AWARDS

These awards will be judged by an independent panel of experts combined with a public voting score to determine the winner in each category.

EXCELLENCE IN TOURISM, ACCOMMODATION AND HOSPITALITY

This award recognises an individual or business who has exhibited dedication to develop the visitor economy in the Macleay Valley. It also recognises excellence in service, facilities and entertainment available to the local community and guests in our region.

EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH, BEAUTY AND WELLBEING

This Award recognises excellence in businesses providing “feel good” services and recognises the health intervention measures and facilities which help to improve quality of life, making a real difference to the wellbeing of our community.

EXCELLENCE IN RETAIL SERVICE

This award recognises businesses or organisations who can demonstrate excellence in their business planning and practices plus show continued development and innovation in their business.

EXCELLENCE IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- 20 or Less Employees

This award recognises businesses with 20 or less employees, that possess specialist knowledge, skills & products that adhere to ethical standards and have been derived from a high level of education, training and experience.

EXCELLENCE IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- 21 or More Employees

This award recognises businesses with 21 or more employees, that possess specialist knowledge, skills & products that adhere to ethical standards and have been derived from a high level of education, training and experience.

EXCELLENCE IN TRADES & INDUSTRY

This award recognises businesses that possess specialist trades, skills & products that adhere to ethical standards and have been derived from a trades certificate, training and experience.

EXCELLENCE IN AGRICULTURE

This Award recognises an individual or business who has contributed to the development of all areas of agribusiness and value add food services across the Macleay Valley. It also recognises key achievements in the industry and honours key people who drive this sector.

NSW CHAMBER ALIGNED AWARDS

These awards will be judged by an independent panel of experts and the winner in each category will be nominated for the NSW Business Chamber Regional Awards.

OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE

The Outstanding Employee Award recognises an inspirational employee who has demonstrated a passion for their role and a commitment to their workplace and the community. It is open to businesses to nominate an employee.

OUTSTANDING YOUNG BUSINESS LEADER

The Outstanding Young Business Leader Award recognises an inspirational business leader aged 35 or under at the time of entry who has demonstrated a commitment to their workplace, industry, and the community through leadership.

OUTSTANDING BUSINESS LEADER - 20 EMPLOYEES AND UNDER

The Outstanding Business Leader Award recognises an inspirational business leader aged 36 years or over at the time of entry who has demonstrated a commitment to their workplace, industry, and the community through leadership, whilst providing mentorship to others.

OUTSTANDING BUSINESS LEADER - 21 EMPLOYEES AND OVER

The Outstanding Business Leader Award recognises an inspirational business leader aged 36 years or over at the time of entry who has demonstrated a commitment to their workplace, industry, and the community through leadership, whilst providing mentorship to others.

EMPLOYER OF CHOICE - UNDER 20 EMPLOYEES

The Employer of Choice Award – Under 20 Employees, recognises a business that has implemented strategies and initiatives to create a stimulating and supportive workplace environment.

EMPLOYER OF CHOICE – 21 EMPLOYEES AND OVER

The Employer of Choice Award – Over 20 Employees, recognises a business that has implemented strategies and initiatives to create a stimulating and supportive workplace environment.

EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION

The Excellence in Innovation Award recognises a business that has implemented innovative solutions for new and existing needs through the introduction or improvement of a product, technology, or application that impacts the wider community.

EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY

The Excellence in Sustainability Award recognises a business that has demonstrated its commitment to sustainable business practices and is working to reduce the impact of its operations on the environment.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

The Outstanding Community Organisation Award recognises an organisation that works to improve the social, cultural, or environmental wellbeing of the community.

OUTSTANDING VISITOR EXPERIENCE – REGIONAL ONLY

The Outstanding Visitor Experience award recognises a business that understands the importance of visitor engagement for a region's economy* and reputation. The business needs to articulate how they promote the Region as well as offering an exceptional visitor experience.

OUTSTANDING NEW BUSINESS

The Outstanding New Business Award recognises a start-up business that has effectively driven growth and is able to demonstrate the potential to achieve future success.

EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

This Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Award recognises businesses that address the needs of a diverse community, including seniors, people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, and people with disability. An inclusive business facilitates the needs of all its employees and customers.

EXCELLENCE IN MICRO BUSINESS LESS THAN 5 EMPLOYEES

The Excellence in Micro Business Award recognises a business that has effectively driven growth and is able to demonstrate the specific strategies implemented to achieve business success and/or resilience.

EXCELLENCE IN SMALL BUSINESS 5 - 20 EMPLOYEES

The Excellence in Small Business Award recognises a business that has effectively driven growth and is able to demonstrate the specific strategies implemented to achieve business success and/or resilience.

EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS MORE THAN 21 EMPLOYEES

The Excellence in Large Business Award recognises a business that has effectively driven growth and is able to demonstrate the specific strategies implemented to achieve business success and/or resilience.

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

1. Eligibility for Entrants

To be eligible to submit an application you should be a Member of a local business chamber or the NSW Business Chamber or be prepared to join the Macleay Valley Business Chamber.

A business must enter ONE of the Local Recognition Award categories and is encourage to enter one or more of the NSW Business Chamber Aligned awards.

Members of the NSW Business Chamber Executive cannot enter into an individual award however, they can enter their business into one of the other categories.

Entries can be submitted online via <https://macleayvalleychamber.com.au/mvba2025/>

2. Eligibility for Voting in Local Recognition Awards

Any individual or business can vote for a Local Recognition Applicant.

There can be only one vote per IP address lodged. You can vote for all Entrants if you wish however you can only vote for a single entrant once.

3. Judging Process

A panel of independent experts will assess all entries to the Awards utilising a scoring system adopted by the NSW Business Chamber. The judges will be recruited from outside the region. All information supplied to the judging panel will remain confidential. The decision of the judges will be final.

4. Confidentiality

All information supplied by an Entrant will remain confidential however each Entrant will be asked to supply a 100 word description of their business that be used for promotional purposes by the Chamber. By entering the Awards, you agree to have this information used for promotional purposes.

5. Social Media

The Macleay Valley Business Chamber will undertake a major social media campaign to promote the Awards through Facebook, Instagram and online. By submitting an application you agree that Macleay Valley Business Chamber can use the 100-word biography of your business in our promotion of the event.

6. Communications

By submitting an Awards entry, an entrant understands and agrees that the Chamber or our Awards Sponsors may contact entrants in relation to the Awards process or promotions and that entrant contact information may be provided to other parties for this purpose.

HOW TO ENTER THE AWARDS

1) BUSINESS DETAILS

To be completed by all entrants including those entering into the individual categories.

1. Trading name:
2. Registered ABN:.....
3. How is your business structured (drop down box)
 Sole Trader Partnership Trust Company
4. Is your business classified as a not for profit? (drop down box)
 Yes No
5. Main Office Address:
6. Business trading commencement date:.....
7. Select from the ANZIC Industry list below the industry sector your business operates in (drop down box)
 - Administrative and Support Services
 - Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
 - Arts and Recreation Services
 - Construction
 - Education and Training
 - Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services
 - Financial and Insurance Services
 - Health Care and Social Assistance
 - Information, Media and Telecommunications
 - Manufacturing
 - Mining
 - Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
 - Public Administration and Safety
 - Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services
 - Retail Trade
 - Transport, Postal and Warehousing
 - Wholesale Trade
 - Other
8. Number of employees on payroll including contractors, casuals and labour hire staff (drop down box)
 - 1 to 4
 - 5 to 19
 - 20 to 49
 - 50 to 99
 - 100 to 199
 - 200+
9. Is your business primarily business to business or business to consumer (drop down box)
 - Business to Business
 - Business to Consumer

10. Please indicate the main reason/s you are entering into the Business Awards

- To raise the profile of my business
- To recognise my staff and our achievements
- To build business networks
- To reflect on the goals, strategies and vision that led to the success of your business and to use those insights to drive even greater success in the future.

11. Please describe the single biggest challenge that your business will face in the next financial year.

.....

.....

.....

12. Please provide a 100-word biography for your business.

This biography will be used for promotional purposes.

.....

.....

.....

13. Website.....

14. Twitter

15. Instagram.....

16. LinkedIn

17. Facebook

2) CONTACT DETAILS

To be completed by all entrants

Entry Contact Details:

Name: Position:

Email:

Phone: Mobile:

Media Contact Details Tick box if same as above

Name: Position:

Email:

Phone: Mobile:

APPLICATION FOR LOCAL AWARDS

***The Local Recognition Awards are NOT a NSW Business Chamber Aligned category.
The winner of the local award will not go on to further Regional or State Awards.***

Conditions of Entry

- Entrants must be located in the Macleay Valley.
- Entrants must complete their application online
- Entrants must answer every question
- Submissions should not exceed 200 words per question
- All answers remain confidential
- The Macleay Valley Business Chamber reserves the right to preclude any entry which may negatively impact on the reputation of the Business Awards and/or its members.

CORE QUESTIONS

All Entrants must answer each question & nominate the award category you wish to enter.
Entrants can enter only ONE local recognition award.

1. Tell us about yourself and the history behind your business. Explain the key strengths of your business and what makes you the best at what you do?
2. Describe how your business has grown, adapted or responded to the trading conditions of the past year. What plans are in place to ensure that your business remains sustainable into the future? Identify two business goals for the next 12 months.
3. What new ideas, new products, new technologies or other innovations have you introduced into your business in the last 12 months? How does your business stay up to date with changes in the business environment and the broader trends in your industry?
4. How does your business identify its customers, market to their needs, gain feedback and improve products and services?
5. How does your business actively support the community and/or business environment? Do you encourage your employees to be involved in community activities?

LOCAL AWARD CATEGORIES

All entrants must select **ONE** award category in the Local Recognition Awards:

- EXCELLENCE IN TOURISM, ACCOMMODATION AND HOSPITALITY**
- EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH, BEAUTY AND WELLBEING**
- EXCELLENCE IN RETAIL SERVICE**
- EXCELLENCE IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**
20 or less employees
- EXCELLENCE IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**
21 or more employees
- EXCELLENCE IN TRADES & INDUSTRY**
- EXCELLENCE IN AGRICULTURE**

APPLICATION FOR NSW CHAMBER ALIGNED AWARDS

There are 15 Award categories that are aligned with the NSW Business Chamber. The winner of each of the following categories will be nominated for the Regional or State Awards.

Entry to these awards is optional and all Entrants MUST have completed a Local Recognition Award.

Conditions of Entry

- Entrants must be located in the Macleay Valley.
- Entrants must complete their application online
- Entrants must answer every question
- All answers remain confidential
- The Macleay Valley Business Chamber reserves the right to preclude any entry which may negatively impact on the reputation of the Business Awards and/or its members.
- Entrant must not be NSW Business Chamber Staff Member, Regional Advisory Councillor, State Councillor or Board Member.

AWARD CATEGORIES:

- OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE**
- OUTSTANDING YOUNG BUSINESS LEADER 35 YEARS AND UNDER**
- OUTSTANDING BUSINESS LEADER 20 EMPLOYEES AND UNDER**
- OUTSTANDING BUSINESS LEADER 21 EMPLOYEES AND OVER**
- EMPLOYER OF CHOICE UNDER 20 EMPLOYEES**
- EMPLOYER OF CHOICE OVER 20 EMPLOYEES**
- EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION**
- EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY**
- OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY ORGANISATION**
- OUTSTANDING VISITOR EXPERIENCE REGIONAL ONLY**
- OUTSTANDING NEW BUSINESS**
- EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**
- EXCELLENCE IN MICRO BUSINESS LESS THAN 5 EMPLOYEES**
- EXCELLENCE IN SMALL BUSINESS BETWEEN 5-20 EMPLOYEES**
- EXCELLENCE IN LARGE BUSINESS 21 OR MORE EMPLOYEES**

OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE

The Outstanding Employee Award recognises an inspirational employee who has demonstrated a passion for their role and a commitment to their workplace and the community. It is open to businesses to nominate an employee.

ENTRY CRITERIA

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

AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK BOX

- ✓ The employee has been employed by their current employer for at least 18 months at the time of entry.
- ✓ The employee is not a Regional President, State Councillor or Board Member of NSW Business Chamber Limited.
- ✓ Neither I nor the employee have been a judge in this category in 2024.
- ✓ Neither I nor the employee am a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.

ADDITIONAL T&C'S

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

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

QUESTIONS

Entrants full name:

Current job title:

Name of the organisation or business you work for:

Commencement of employment date:

1. Provide a brief profile, including your current role and scope of responsibilities. *Maximum word count: 200*
2. Outline their measurable achievements and key milestones while with the business. *Maximum word count: 300*
3. Outline how the employee demonstrates integrity and professionalism in the workplace. *Maximum word count: 300*
4. Detail the specific activities and initiatives they have undertaken that have demonstrated a passion for their role and a commitment to the workplace and/or the community. *Maximum word count: 400*
5. Outline the reasons why they are an outstanding employee. *Maximum word count: 400*

OUTSTANDING YOUNG BUSINESS LEADER

The Outstanding Young Business Leader Award recognises an inspirational business leader, aged 35 or under at the time of entry, who has demonstrated a commitment to their workplace, industry, and the community through leadership.

ENTRY CRITERIA

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

AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK BOX

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

QUESTIONS

Entrants full name:

Current job title:

Date of birth:

Name of your organisation or business:

1. Provide a brief profile, including your current role and scope of responsibilities. *Maximum word count: 200*
2. Detail specific activities and initiatives you have undertaken to reshape your workplace, industry, or community to create a smarter and more inclusive future, with examples of how you have demonstrated exceptional leadership, effectively utilised resources, and/or driven innovation. *Maximum word count: 400*
3. Describe the key challenges you have faced as a young business leader and how you overcame them. *Maximum word count: 300*
4. Provide an overview of your five-year goals and strategies for business growth, detailing how you are working towards achieving them. *Maximum word count: 300*
5. Outline the reasons why you are an outstanding young business leader. *Maximum word count: 400*

OUTSTANDING BUSINESS LEADER

– 20 EMPLOYEES AND UNDER

The Outstanding Business Leader Award recognises an inspirational business leader, aged 36 years or over at the time of entry, who has demonstrated a commitment to their workplace, industry, and the community through leadership, while also providing mentorship to others.

ENTRY CRITERIA

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

AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK BOX

- ✓ I am aged 36 or over years at the time of entry.
- ✓ I am not an employee, Regional President, State Councillor or Board Member of NSW Business Chamber Limited.
- ✓ I have not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- ✓ I am not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.
- ✓ This business has 20 or fewer employees on the payroll in Australia at the time of entry.

QUESTIONS

Entrants full name:

Current job title:

Date of birth:

Name of your organisation or business:

1. Provide a brief profile, including your current role and scope of responsibilities. *Maximum word count: 200*
2. Detail specific activities and initiatives you have undertaken to reshape your workplace, industry, or community to create a smarter and more inclusive future, with examples of how you have demonstrated exceptional leadership, effectively utilised resources, and/or driven innovation. *Maximum word count: 400*
3. Describe the key challenges you have faced as a business leader and how you overcame them. *Maximum word count: 300*
4. Provide an overview of your five-year goals and strategies for business growth, detailing how you are working towards achieving them. *Maximum word count: 300*
5. Outline the reasons why you are an outstanding business leader, including the ways in which you provide mentorship to others. *Maximum word count: 400*

OUTSTANDING BUSINESS LEADER

– 21 EMPLOYEES AND OVER

The Outstanding Business Leader Award recognises an inspirational business leader, aged 36 years or over at the time of entry, who has demonstrated a commitment to their workplace, industry, and the community through leadership, while providing mentorship to others.

ENTRY CRITERIA

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

AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK BOX

- ✓ I am aged 36 or over years at the time of entry.
- ✓ I am not an employee, Regional President, State Councillor or Board Member of NSW Business Chamber Limited.
- ✓ I have not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- ✓ I am not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.
- ✓ This business has 21 or more employees on the payroll in Australia at the time of entry.

QUESTIONS

Entrants full name:

Current job title:

Date of birth:

Name of your organisation or business:

1. Provide a brief profile, including your current role and scope of responsibilities. *Maximum word count: 200*
2. Detail specific activities and initiatives you have undertaken to reshape your workplace, industry, or community to create a smarter and more inclusive future, with examples of how you have demonstrated exceptional leadership, effectively utilised resources, and/or driven innovation. *Maximum word count: 400*
3. Describe the key challenges you have faced as a business leader and how you overcame them. *Maximum word count: 300*
4. Provide an overview of your five-year goals and strategies for business growth, detailing how you are working towards achieving them. *Maximum word count: 300*
5. Outline the reasons why you are an outstanding business leader, including the ways in which you provide mentorship to others. *Maximum word count: 400*

EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

- UNDER 20 EMPLOYEES

The Employer of Choice Award – Under 20 Employees recognises a business that has implemented strategies and initiatives to create a stimulating and supportive workplace environment.

ENTRY CRITERIA

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

AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK BOX

- ✓ The business has been trading for a continuous period of two years or more and is not bankrupt or trading insolvent at the time of entry.
- ✓ This business has 20 or fewer employees on the payroll in Australia at the time of entry.
- ✓ A representative of this business has not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- ✓ A representative of this business is not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.

QUESTIONS

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

EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

- 21 EMPLOYEES AND OVER

The Employer of Choice Award – Over 20 Employees recognises a business that has implemented strategies and initiatives to create a stimulating and supportive workplace environment.

ENTRY CRITERIA

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

AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK BOX

- ✓ The business has been trading for a continuous period of two years or more and is not bankrupt or trading insolvent at the time of entry.
- ✓ This business has 21 or more employees on the payroll in Australia at the time of entry.
- ✓ A representative of this business has not been a judge in this category in 2024.
- ✓ A representative of this business is not a judge in the 2025 Business Awards program.

QUESTIONS

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

EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION

The Excellence in Innovation Award recognises a business that has implemented innovative solutions for new and existing needs through the introduction or improvement of a product, technology, or application that impacts the wider community.

ENTRY CRITERIA

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

AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK BOX

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

QUESTIONS

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

EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY

The Excellence in Sustainability Award recognises a business that has demonstrated its commitment to sustainable business practices and is working to reduce the impact of its operations on the environment.

ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants must demonstrate their achievements in environmental sustainability over the past 12 months at time of entry. The category criteria are based on initiatives and projects within the business that are not related to its core offering.

AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK BOX

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

QUESTIONS

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

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

The Outstanding Community Organisation Award recognises an organisation that works to improve the social, cultural, or environmental wellbeing of the community.

ENTRY CRITERIA

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

AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK BOX

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

QUESTIONS

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

OUTSTANDING VISITOR EXPERIENCE

– REGIONAL ONLY

The Outstanding Visitor Experience award recognises a business that understands the importance of visitor engagement for a region's economy and reputation. The business needs to articulate how they promote the region while as well a offering an exceptional visitor experience.*

ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants must demonstrate how their business showcases the region/community and how their offering is unique within their industry.

AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK BOX

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

QUESTIONS

1. Provide an overview of your business and your target market/s. *Maximum word count: 200*
2. Describe what makes your service offering unique within your industry and how it differentiates your business from competitors. *Maximum word count: 300*
3. Describe your customer service strategy and how your business implements this strategy to ensure visitor satisfaction. *Maximum word count: 300*
4. Demonstrate how your business attracts and engages visitors to the region, including measurable targets. *Maximum word count: 400*
5. Provide an overview of the key features of your strategy and plans for the visitor economy over the next 12 months. *Maximum word count: 400*

*The visitor economy encompasses the direct and indirect contributions to the economy resulting from a person (a visitor) travelling outside their normal place of residence. ([NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030](#))

OUTSTANDING NEW BUSINESS

The Outstanding New Business Award recognises a start-up that has effectively driven growth and is able to demonstrate potential to achieve future success.

ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants must demonstrate their commitment to being an outstanding start-up over the past 12 months. This category is open to businesses that have been trading for less than 24 months at the time of entry.

AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK BOX

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

QUESTIONS

1. Provide an overview of your business, including the product or service you offer, how you identified the market need and who your target customers are. *Maximum word count: 200*
2. Provide an overview of the key features of your business development strategy and projected outcomes for the future. *Maximum word count: 300*
3. Describe why your product or service offering is unique within your industry and differentiates your business from competitors. *Maximum word count: 300*
4. Detail the measurable growth and key milestones you have achieved since launching your business. *Maximum word count: 400*
5. Describe the key challenges your business has faced as a new business and how you overcame them. *Maximum word count: 400*

EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Award recognises businesses that address the needs of a diverse community, including seniors, people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, and people with disability. An inclusive business facilitates the needs of all its employees and customers.

ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants must demonstrate their commitment over the past 12 months to address the needs of a diverse community. This category is open to businesses that have been trading continuously for two or more years.

AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK BOX

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

QUESTIONS

1. Outline your current staff level and diversity – including employees with disability, older people (over 55), women, young people (18-24 years), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from CALD backgrounds. *Maximum word count: 200*
2. Identify and describe your positive and/or proactive inclusive practices within the business that go beyond regulatory compliance. *Maximum word count: 350*
3. Describe your HR and employment hiring practices that demonstrate your commitment to being an inclusive employer. *Maximum word count: 350*
4. Identify and describe how your business has created an accessible and inclusive environment that is welcoming for customers with a disability, seniors and people from CALD backgrounds. *Maximum word count: 400*
5. Explain why your business embarked on being more accessible and inclusive and describe what further actions you will take in the future to become more accessible and inclusive to employees and customers. *Maximum word count: 400*

EXCELLENCE IN MICRO BUSINESS

The Excellence in Micro Business Award recognises a business that has effectively driven growth and can demonstrate the specific strategies implemented to achieve business success and/or resilience.

ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants must demonstrate their achievements in business excellence over the past 12 months at the time of entry. This category is open to businesses with fewer than five employees at the time of entry, that have been trading for more than 24 months.

AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK BOX

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

QUESTIONS

1. Detail what your business goals and key milestones were for the previous 12 months and how you achieved all or part of them. *Maximum word count: 300*
2. Provide an overview of the key features of your business plan including goals, innovations, strategies, projected outcomes for the future. *Maximum word count: 400*
3. Describe what makes your product or service unique within your industry and how it differentiates your business from its competitors. *Maximum word count: 400*
4. Demonstrate how your business contributes to the local economy in your region. *Maximum word count: 400*
5. Describe the key challenges your business has faced over the past 12 months and explain how you have managed their impact on your business's strategic direction. *Maximum word count: 400*

EXCELLENCE IN SMALL BUSINESS

The Excellence in Small Business Award recognises a business that has effectively driven growth and can demonstrate the strategies implemented to achieve business success and/or resilience.

ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants must demonstrate their achievements in business excellence over the past 12 months. This category is open to businesses with five to 20 employees at the time of entry, who have been trading for more than 24 months at the time of entry.

AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK BOX

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

QUESTIONS

1. Detail what your business goals and key milestones were for the past 12 months and how you achieved all or part of them. *Maximum word count: 300*
 2. Provide an overview of the key features of your business plan including goals, innovations, strategies, and projected future outcomes. *Maximum word count: 400*
 3. Describe what makes your product or service unique within your industry and how it differentiates your business from competitors. *Maximum word count: 400*
 4. Demonstrate how your business contributes to the local economy in your region. *Maximum word count: 400*
 5. Describe the key challenges your business has faced over the past 12 months and explain how you have managed their impact on your business's strategic direction. *Maximum word count: 400*
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EXCELLENCE IN LARGE BUSINESS

The Excellence in Large Business Award recognises a business that has effectively driven growth and can demonstrate the specific strategies implemented to achieve business success and/or resilience.

ENTRY CRITERIA

Entrants must demonstrate their achievements in business excellence over the past 12 months. This category is open to businesses with 21 or more employees at the time of entry, who have been trading for more than 24 months at the time of entry.

AWARD ELIGIBILITY CHECK BOX

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

QUESTIONS

1. Detail what your business goals and key milestones were for the past 12 months and how you achieved all or part of them. *Maximum word count: 300*
2. Provide an overview of the key features of your business plan including goals, innovations, strategies, projected outcomes for the future. *Maximum word count: 400*
3. Describe what makes your product or service unique within your industry and how it differentiates your business from competitors. *Maximum word count: 400*
4. Demonstrate how your business contributes to the local economy in your region. *Maximum word count: 400*
5. Describe the key challenges your business has faced over the past 12 months and explain how you have managed their impact on your business's strategic direction. *Maximum word count: 400*

If you are uncertain as to which category your business is best suited, please consult this guide. If you are still uncertain then please contact Macleay Valley Business Awards Coordinator Lisa McPherson on 0422 210 824.

AWARDS CATEGORIES – LOCAL BUSINESS RECOGNITION	
TOURISM, ACCOMMODATION & HOSPITALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hotels, Motels, Farm Stays, BnB, Caravan Parks Pubs, Clubs, Conference Centres Restaurants, Cafes, Catering Services, Food Vans & Vendors Museums, Galleries, Tourist Attractions, Themed Entertainments
TRADES & INDUSTRY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction Trades and Services, Trade Suppliers, Nurseries, Garden & Landscape Suppliers Automotive Sales, Auto Repairers & Servicing, Parts & Accessories, Hire & Leasing Engineering Services, manufacturers, Food & Beverage Processing Mining Services Cleaning Services, Air conditioning services
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 20 Employees • More than 20 Employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial: Banks, Credit Unions, Lending & Financial Services Lawyers, Solicitors, Conveyancers, Insurance Agencies IT Services, Communications Services, Graphic Designers, Marketing Services, Interior Designers, Photography Studios, Media Services Property: Real Estate Agents, Managing Agencies, Property Valuers Education: Pre-schools, Schools & Colleges, Training Institutions, RTOs, Driving Instructors, Flight Schools Community & Social: Employment Services, Family Support Services, Disability Support Services, Respite Care, Aged Care, Business Advisory, Home Care Architects, Surveyors, Travel Agents, Car Hire
HEALTH, BEAUTY & WELL BEING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Practices, Dentistry, Pharmacies Personal Training, Gym & fitness Studios, Instructors – Yoga, Pilates, Dance Hairdressers, Salons, Spas, Barbers Naturopaths, Nutritionists Veterinarians, Pet Grooming & Services
RETAIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail shops: clothing, jewellery, household, food, sport & recreation, computer & telephone supplies, Takeaways Online sales, market sellers, artists & craft sellers Franchises, Large Retail Chains, Bulky or Electrical Goods
EXCELLENCE IN AGRICULTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural producers: dairy, beef, poultry, seafood, beverages Food processing, value add production