



2021

HANDBOOK FOR ENTRANTS



WELCOME

Congratulations on nominating your business for the 2021 Canberra Region Tourism Awards!

As well as recognising our Region's leading tourism businesses, the Canberra Region Tourism Awards are designed to help improve your business. In developing your submission, you will need to review your current goals, strategies and performance and identify areas for improvement and plan for the future, which makes the Awards process an important business development tool. Many tourism businesses have told us that entering the Awards forces them to look at the big picture, to monitor their progress and to commit to a culture of continuous improvement.

Entering the Awards also helps position your business as a leader in its field and to develop important ties with industry, government and fellow tourism businesses. Of course, those entrants who win their category will receive further prestige, exposure and recognition, and have the opportunity to leverage their Award win to further promote their business.

The Canberra Region Tourism Awards program is managed by the National Capital Attractions Association (NCAA) Canberra Region Tourism Industry Council (CRTIC) which is a not-for-profit membership organisation that aims to engage, represent, strengthen and empower the Canberra Region tourism industry. The Canberra Region Tourism Awards are part of the National Quality Tourism Framework, with categories and questions set by the Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC). Winners of most categories in the local Awards will go on to contest the Australian Tourism Awards, competing against operators from across Australia.

Good luck with preparing your submission.



Naomi Dale

DR NAOMI DALE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CRTIC



Phillip Jones

PHILLIP JONES

CHAIR OF JUDGES



ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook 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. It also contains information on the support that is available to businesses that enter the Awards, key dates, the judging process and site visits, the rules for entry, and advice on how to tackle specific questions. We encourage you to refer to it regularly and to use the checklists provided to ensure you stay on track with your submission.

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Contact the Tourism Awards Manager for all Tourism Awards queries.

Disclaimer

By entering the Canberra Region Tourism Awards, you authorise the use and/or reproduction of images and the 100-word description provided in relation to any editorial/advertising purposes initiated in conjunction with the awards and the Australian Tourism Awards. Your contact details may also be supplied to agencies/sponsors engaged on behalf of award/organisers/committees for promotional purposes.

Under no circumstances will judges be held responsible for any comment, viewpoint or expression, whether expressed or implied, concerning the standard or quality of an entrant's submission. By ticking the terms and conditions box, you agree not to bring a claim against any Judge, or the Canberra Region Tourism Industry Council in relation to feedback on your submission.

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1.0

KEY INFORMATION

1.1 RULES FOR ENTRY

It's important for all entrants to carefully read the Rules for Entry, which can be found on the Canberra Region Tourism Awards [website](#). Auditors are involved in the judging process and points can be deducted if the Rules for Entry are not followed.

If you have any queries regarding the Rules for Entry, please contact the Canberra Region Tourism Awards Manager.

1.2 TOURISM AWARDS PROCESS

STEP 1. NOMINATE ONLINE

Complete a nomination online and make your entry fee payment prior to **23 July 2021**. Please visit the portal at online.qualitytourismaustralia.com

STEP 2. SUBMISSION PREPARATION

Start preparing your submission in accordance with the Rules for Entry and utilise CRTA's entrant support.

STEP 3. SITE VISITS

If applicable, a site visit will be carried out by CRTA judge (during August).

STEP 4. SUBMISSION LODGEMENT

Lodge your award submission online by **5pm, Thursday 9 September 2021**.

STEP 5. SUBMISSION JUDGING

Your submission will be assessed by the judging panel during September. An independent auditor reviews judging process and outcomes.

STEP 6. CRTA WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Winners and Commendation recipients will be announced at the Canberra Region Tourism Awards Event on **Friday, 26 November 2021**.

STEP 7. AUSTRALIAN TOURISM AWARDS ENTRY

Winners of categories 1–25 qualify as Qantas Australian Tourism Award (QATA) finalists.

STEP 8. NATIONAL JUDGING

National judging takes place for the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards. An independent auditor reviews judging process and outcomes.

STEP 9. FEEDBACK SESSIONS

One-on-one judge feedback sessions are provided for non-QATA finalists following the CRTA event.

STEP 10. NATIONAL WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Winners will be announced at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards event, held in **February 2022 on the Sunshine Coast**. One-on-one judge feedback sessions are provided for Qantas Australian Tourism Awards finalists following the event.

1.3 2021 KEY DATES

| EVENT | DATE |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Nominations open | Thursday 20 May |
| Entrant support | July - August |
| Nominations close | 5pm, Friday 23 July |
| Site visits | August/September (where relevant) |
| Submissions close | 5pm, Thursday 9 September |
| Online judging | 10 September – 26 September |
| Canberra Region Tourism Awards Event | Friday 26 November |
| Australian Tourism Awards Event | February 2022, Sunshine Coast |

1.4 THE SUBMISSION JUDGING PROCESS

Once all submissions are received, the Tourism Awards Manager allocates each written submission to a judging team comprised of three judges. Your submission will be independently read and scored by each judge.

When the judges convene, all scoring data is entered into a scoresheet to determine the winner and commendation. If there are any anomalies in the three judges' scores, the judging team will reassess the submissions to determine the winner. In the case of large anomalies – or when a category is particularly close – other judges, including the Chair of Judges, may be called in to offer advice.

The judging team will also refer to the site verification visit feedback report when finalising your score.

1.5 HOW IS THE WINNER DETERMINED?

The entrant with the highest overall score in each category is declared the winner. A Commendation is awarded to the second-highest scoring entrant, where the entrant has a sufficiently high score. 'Hall of Fame' recognition is awarded to entrants who win the same category three years in a row.

Winner

Presented to the entrant with the highest score in the category, where the entrant has scored 75% or higher. The Winner will go on to represent the Canberra Region at the 2021 Qantas Australian Tourism Awards.

Commendation

Presented to the entrant with the second-highest score in the category, where the entrant has deemed a suitable standard.

If for example there is only two entrants in your category, this does not guarantee a win or commendation.

Hall of Fame

Presented to entrants who win the same category three years in a row (for this year, that includes those entrants who have won in 2018, 2019 & 2021)

1.6 WHAT ARE THE 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.
- Demonstrated tourism industry knowledge and evidence of your contribution to the industry.
- A recognition and understanding of target markets.
- A substantiated commitment to sustainability.

WHY DO THE JUDGES NEED TO KNOW SO MUCH?

The Canberra Region and Australian Tourism Awards require you to conduct a detailed analysis of your business. Not only are judges looking for a great product or experience, they also want to see evidence of a well-managed and financially sound business, which adds to the credibility and value of the Awards.

Also, entering the Tourism Awards isn't just about winning recognition for your business – it's an important business development tool that will help you review where you've been, where you're at and your plans for the future.

| FEATURE | AVOID |
|--|---|
| Logical and succinct answers | Meandering and 'wordy' answers, waffle |
| Quality photos that complement text | 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 and passion | Promising submissions that lose steam |
| Quotes and testimonials that support your answer | Generic responses using sweeping statements |
| Evidence of tangible measurement tools | Non-substantiated claims |
| Demonstrated understanding of tourism industry | Submissions with little tourism industry acknowledgement or relevance |



2.0

GETTING STARTED

SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME: NOW UNTIL JULY

Preparing a Tourism Awards submission is a significant commitment – no matter the size of your business. It is not something you will be able to put together in a day or two.

However, though the Awards do require a significant amount of staff resources, countless tourism businesses have told us that it is well worth it. Not only do you have a chance of gaining recognition at both a territory and national level, the process of entering the Awards alone is valuable, forcing you to step back from your day-to-day operations and assess the performance of your business, to review past efforts and to plan for the future.

2.1 PREPARATION IS KEY

There is 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 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 are QTAB accredited there are various free templates and examples within the program.
- Visitor numbers for the qualifying period, as well as 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.**
- WHS and **Risk Management** policies and procedures.
- Staff development and training policies, and information on activities that took place during the qualifying period.

2.2 NOT A QUALITY TOURISM ACCREDITED BUSINESS (QTAB)?



In 2019, the Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) introduced a new module within the [Awards portal](#) called '**Business Standards**' for any business who is **not** [Quality Tourism Accredited Business \(QTAB\)](#) accredited. Please note: this module must be completed before you can submit your Tourism Awards Submission on 9 September.

The Business Standards features questions from the [Quality Tourism Accredited Business \(QTAB\)](#) program about the Insurances/Licences/Permits, Business and Marketing Plan, Human Resource Management, Customer Service, Sustainability Practices and Hazard/Risk Management for your business.

These questions can be answered at any time throughout the awards process up until the submission due date on **9 September**.

However, **we suggest completing these questions ASAP** so that there is no urgency to complete them while finalising your submission. Once completed, you will have satisfied all requirements of the [Quality Tourism Accredited Business \(QTAB\)](#) program.

Please note: QTAB Accredited businesses are not required to complete Business Standards questions.

2.3 ACCOMMODATION ENTRANTS - NOT STAR RATED?



In 2019, ATIC introduced the requirement for all accommodation category entrants who are **not** officially Star Rated to demonstrate their adherence to '**Accommodation Standards**'.

The 'Accommodation Standards' pre-assessment questions are based on the Star Ratings program which assesses the various components of your property in two key areas: Facilities & Services and Quality & Condition. When this pre-assessment is completed, **you will receive an un-official Star Rating** and be provided with a report on how your property scored in specific areas.

These Accommodation Standards can be completed at any time throughout the awards process up until the submission due date on **9 September**.

We suggest completing these questions so that there is no urgency to complete them while finalising your submission.

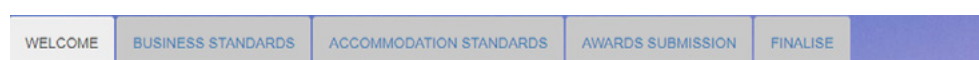
Please note, this **does not give your business an official Star Rating**, however it does take you one step closer to obtaining an official Star Rating and use of the trademark if you wish to pursue.

Please note: Star Rated businesses are not required to complete Accommodation Standards questions.

For any business that needs to complete any of the below for their awards submission, you need to do this within your Awards nomination in the portal, not in the accreditation or stars systems sections.

- Business Standards
- Star Ratings
- Niche module e.g. V.I.C or Eco

You will see the tabs in your nomination that are relevant to your award. Example below.



Welcome to your 2021 Awards Submission



**“DON’T LEAVE
THE TOURISM
AND TOURISTS
OUT OF YOUR
TOURISM AWARD.”**

3.0

DOING THE WORK

Now is the time to really get down to work. A great way to start the process is to block out a few hours and brainstorm each question with your team (or yourself), noting down any activities or achievements that can be aligned to each question. This process will also reveal any questions that require further consideration or research, and determine what additional information is required to write your submission.

As soon as possible after the brainstorming session, make a list of relevant points under each question. This process is all about getting your ideas down, not writing a finished copy, so don't worry about crafting perfect prose at this stage.

The next step is to gather any information that you may require to explain and/or substantiate your answers – refer back to Step 2 for a list of the type of information you are likely to require. Now group this additional information under each relevant question, focusing on getting the raw material aligned to the questions, rather than writing in finished sentences. For example, the information on your target markets will be aligned to Question 3, while results from guest feedback forms will be most suited to Question 4.

Once you have been through this process you should have a rough first draft. Well done!

3.1 ADVICE FOR PREVIOUS ENTRANTS

In addition to the process above, dig out last year's submission and go through it with a red pen, highlighting areas that need updating, that need improving or that are no longer relevant. (Remember: your submission must refer to the qualifying period). Be sure to also address the judges' feedback from the previous year and note on your draft any areas that the judges suggested as needing improvement. (For example, if judges commented that your marketing outcomes were not tangible and measurable, then make a note of this in your first draft so you don't forget to address it).

If you are entering the same category again, make sure you review the questions carefully - some have changed this year so don't assume they are the same. You can re-use generic information on your business in a subsequent submission, but remember that activities, strategies and outcomes need to relate to this qualifying period.

3.2 WRITING TONE

A Tourism Awards submission is both a motivational sales document and an information piece that provides evidence of why your business is worthy of an award. It is important to share your enthusiasm and passion in your submission and to 'sell' your business, however, avoid overly promotional language and unsubstantiated claims. As well as telling the judges why your business is unique and an industry leader, you need to include relevant information that backs up your claims. In summary, a balance of 'wow' and 'facts' is required.

Be sure to also pay attention to written expression, spelling, typos and grammar, and allow ample time for proofreading. Submissions that contain multiple spelling and grammatical errors reflect badly on the professionalism of the business and are likely to be scored down. It's also a good idea to use dot points and sub-headings throughout your submission to break up large amounts of text and to make it easier to read.

3.3 OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER

Are you accredited?

If so, you are already halfway to preparing your Tourism Awards submission as there is a direct alignment between some of the questions asked in the Tourism Awards and the Quality Tourism Accreditation Program. And don't forget to display your accreditation logo and refer to it in your submission.

Answers must relate to the qualifying period (1st July 2019 – 30th June 2021)

You can refer to past results if relevant, but only if it helps you to answer the question. (For example, you might refer to past year's visitor numbers as a way of demonstrating growth.)

It's a Tourism Award

Make sure you reinforce throughout your submission 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, wineries and events.

Are you in the right category?

It's important to enter the category that best reflects your core business. You will also need to establish your eligibility for the category in Question 1.

Note the points allocated to each question

This reflects the weighting of the question and should guide you in determining how many words to dedicate to the question. For most categories that are 8000 words maximum, you should aim to write approximately 2000 words per question. Take careful note of the Response Guidance points as you go.

Don't assume local knowledge

Your judge may not be familiar with your region or community, so don't assume they are. Furthermore, if your submission wins its category and goes onto the National Awards, the judge is unlikely to have any knowledge of your business and/or region. Set the scene and write for an interstate reader.

For example, if referring to the National Arboretum, explain what it is, where it is in relation to Canberra city and why it is so important. Always include a location map (in relation to Canberra Region) in Question 1 and include drive times and kilometres.



4.0

ALL ABOUT YOUR SUBMISSION

By now you should have gathered all the information required to write your submission (see Step 2), have brainstormed ideas and strategies for answering each question and have a rough first draft.

If you want to take advantage of the **Draft Submission Review** you should note the deadline (**late August**) to submit your draft for review into the [Awards portal](#).

4.1 HOW TO WRITE YOUR SUBMISSION

As discussed earlier, writing a Tourism Award submission takes time and it's unlikely you'll be able to finish it in a day or two. We suggest approaching your submission question by question and allowing ample time for revisions and editing.

Where do I start?

Your first draft will probably be a collection of dot points and notes under each of the questions. Now is the time to assemble your thoughts and draft a response to each question. Use the opening paragraph of each question to make the most important overall points about the approach you take in your business, then follow this with an explanation of how this works in action, using real-life examples wherever possible.

Writing style

As discussed earlier, your submission needs to achieve a balance of promotion and personalisation and provide accurate information that answers the question. Most importantly, make sure you understand and answer each question. Use a clear, concise, easy-to-read writing style, and pay close attention to spelling and grammar. Avoid repetition where possible, and don't use sector-specific acronyms without spelling them out in full on first use. A mix of paragraphs, dot points and tables are encouraged.

Don't cut and paste

If you are entering more than one category, although some sections may be similar, make sure that the entries are tailored to the specific category and relevant questions. Likewise, if you are revisiting a previous year's submission, be sure to refresh and update your submission and to check for changes to questions.

Substantiate claims

Use examples and anecdotes to back up what you are saying where appropriate. Not only does this help the judges understand the point you are trying to make, it helps them to see the personality and culture of your business or operation. Guest and/or stakeholder comments can also be incorporated into your submission as a way of substantiating your claims.

Can it be measured?

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

4.2 HOW TO ANSWER EACH QUESTION

The section below contains advice on how to answer each of the generic questions in each category, using Category 1 (Major Tourist Attractions) as an example.

Please note that each category has specific questions relevant to that sector, so the information below should be used as a guide only.

4.2.1 COVID-19 IMPACTS (0 MARKS)

Please provide the judges with an understanding of your business' situation during the national and world events during the qualifying period. e.g. COVID-19, natural disasters (such as fire).

NOTE: These responses do not contribute to your overall score or word count but provides a clearer picture for judges to understand what you have been able to achieve. This is factual information allowing you to tell your business story in your written submission.

1. Outline for how many months in the second half of the qualifying period your business was operational.
2. Describe what the business restrictions were to your business e.g. gatherings.
3. Describe the impact of travel restrictions to your business e.g. border closures.

4.2.2 QUESTION 1. INTRODUCTION (20 MARKS)

Please provide an overview of your tourism products, experiences and services including the nature and history of the business. How does your business demonstrate tourism excellence?

This question acts as an executive summary of your entire submission. It should set the tone for your submission by conveying the essence of your business and the experience on offer and explain its ownership structure and location.

YOUR ANSWER SHOULD:

Take the judge on a journey of your business; describe the visitor experience and the product/experience/service on offer.

- Include relevant visuals, such as photos of the different types of accommodation on offer and/or facilities, such as the restaurant, garden, bar.
- Use graphics to support and enhance your response. For example, a map of where you are located, images of the product/service and any specific facilities/amenities/services you have highlighted in your response, a collage of the accreditation programs you participate in and/or any award achievements
- Provide a **brief summary of the history of your business and how it has developed over the years**, noting any continuous improvements that have been made.
- It is essential that you clearly **demonstrate that your eligibility to enter the category** (pay close attention to the category descriptor)
- Clearly **state what sets your business apart from your competitors** and why your business should be considered as an award-winning product/experience/service.
- Demonstrate your **commitment to tourism excellence** by explaining how the business has been actively involved with and contributed to the tourism industry (locally and nationally). Use headings to break this information down.

- For example, are you a member of your local tourism association, do you work closely with your local Visitor Information Centre, do you attend industry conferences, seminars and forums and/or do you participate in state/national tourism programs and/or marketing and PR campaigns?
- Tourism excellence can also be demonstrated by **involvement in any other award or industry programs or accreditations you hold.**

4.2.3 QUESTION 2.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (20 MARKS)

During the qualifying period, what have you implemented to improve your product/experience/service and/or to provide business recovery/resilience in the wake of national and world events during the qualifying period?

YOUR ANSWER SHOULD:

Clearly outline how you have improved the product/experience/service within the qualifying period. Additionally, or alternatively, this question seeks to

| GOAL | STRATEGIES | OUTCOMES |
|---|---|---|
| Achieve 5% revenue growth to \$50,000 in 20/21. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase repeat client rates by introducing an incentive program. ■ Increase average spend per guest by offering add-on experiences at time of booking. ■ Control expenditure through account management and cash flow analysis. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Repeat visitation represented 20% of overall business in 20/21 (\$10,000), up from 16% in 19/20 ■ Average spend increased by 8% to \$95 pp in 20/21. ■ Expenditure maintained at \$25,000, or 50% of gross revenue. |
| Increase visitation by 15% from 5,000 people in 19/20 to 5750 people in 20/21. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implement a social media networking strategy. ■ Conduct a PR campaign in the Canberra and regional markets. ■ Expand product offering for families to attract more of this market. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Facebook followers increased by 20% in 20/21 to 300. ■ Distributed 6 media releases, did 2 ABC radio interviews and achieved further reach. |
| Achieve a 95% guest satisfaction rating for 20/21. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Email an experience survey to all guests within one week of their stay, with the incentive of a 10% discount on future stays for those who complete it. ■ Empower staff to deal with complaints/concerns as they arise. ■ Ensure all staff undergo customer service training on an annual basis. ■ Introduce an 'employee of the month' award for staff based on guest feedback. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 60% of guests completed the guest survey in 20/21, providing a high response rate. ■ 98% of guests indicated they were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their stay. |

understand what strategies were implemented for business endurance through a year of challenging national and world events.

Demonstrate the planning and implementation of the improvement/development by outlining the Goal, Strategies and Outcomes within the qualifying period (refer to table example above).

This question is asking you to explain what you wanted to achieve (the goal), how you went about it (the strategies) and what happened as a result (outcomes). A three-column table works well for this question, as shown above, though you should use a format that works best for your business.

- Consider choosing 4 to 5 goals to include in this section. Ensure they are specific, measurable and have a clear timeframe.
- Choose goals from a cross-section of your business - for example, **financial goals, marketing goals, customer service goals, environmental/sustainability goals, risk management goals.**
- Include at least one goal that is related to the **financial performance of your business** as this will help demonstrate that your business is viable and sustainable. You do not need to include actual figures – instead consider using percentage increases.
- **Ensure that each goal should have several strategies associated with it.** These are the methods you used to achieve the goal.
- Include **quantified results and outcomes** wherever possible. These could include:
- Sales (bed nights, passenger numbers,

attendance figures), visitor numbers, increased number of tours, restaurant patronage/number of meals served, new/improved facilities, merchandise sales, wholesaler/travel agent statistics, social media/website statistics, event numbers and patronage or customer satisfaction ratings.

- Consider what **environmental/social/economic/ethical initiatives or achievements** were made during the qualifying period
- If you have made a **financial investment to training and development**, then state the figure and whether this was an increase on the previous year. If your investment has been non-financial then explain this.
- Remember that professional development is broader than training, encompassing career and succession planning, performance reviews and personal development.

Examples of professional development activities might include:

- Attending workshops, seminars and conferences – either in-person or online
- Subscribing to and reading industry newsletters and reports
- Formal study at TAFE or university (Providing staff with time off for study is another way you can support professional development.)
- Having regular staff meetings and/or team building sessions
- Administration and/or IT training

Be sure to explain how any staff training and development activities have improved your business and visitor experience.

4.2.4 QUESTION 3. MARKETING (20 MARKS)

What marketing strategies did you implement to attract or maintain your existing or new target markets to support business growth and/or business recovery/ resilience. Why were these strategies chosen and what was the result?

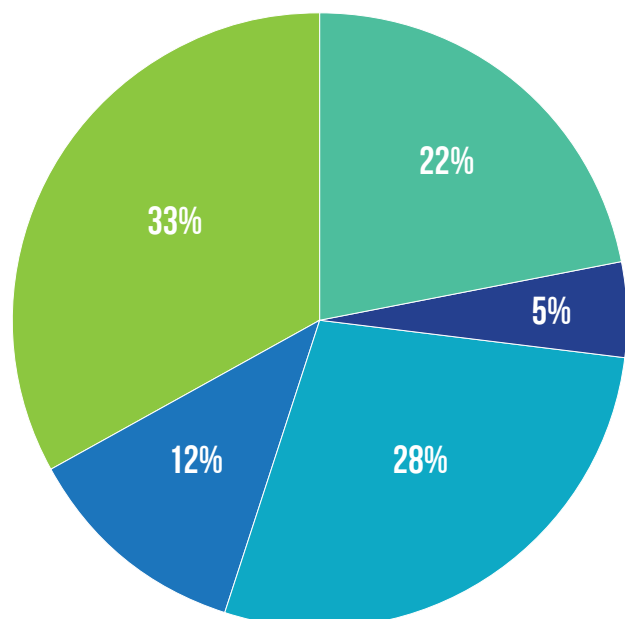
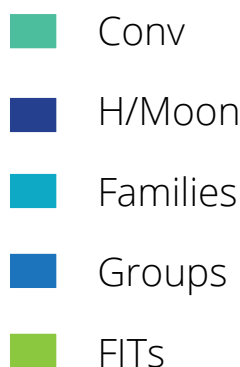
YOUR ANSWER SHOULD:

- Demonstrate a clear knowledge of your target market.
 - The judges want to know **who your target markets are, where they come from, how old they are, how they purchase travel, what motivates/inspires them and how your product meets their expectations.** You can segment your target markets according to

geographic origin local, intrastate, interstate, international) and/or the type of market, such as business, families, conventions, FIT.

- After identifying your key target markets, avoid introducing any further target markets in subsequent sections.
- When using graphs ensure they are clearly labelled and provide a brief explanation of what the graph shows.
- Also try to develop a 'profile' for your markets according to demographic and psychographic factors. For example, your target market may be NSW families but 'who' are these families, what age are they, where do they live, what motivates them to travel, what media do they consume etc.?

TARGET MARKETS 2020/21



Sample pie chart indicating target markets by market segment descriptors.

- Demographic considerations include age, sex, income, origin and employment status.
- Psychographic considerations that you can discuss include motivations for travel and whether they are empty nesters, families, backpackers, young couples etc.

Your answer should also:

- **Explain how your chosen marketing activities relate to your target market** and demonstrate considerations made to broader local/regional/state tourism strategies.
- **Demonstrate the outcomes** of these marketing strategies.

What research have you conducted or used to determine your target market, and how do you know these target markets are the right ones for your business?

When explaining your answer provide examples of research, feedback, data from past visitation, focus groups, emerging market trends and/or current market changes to back up what you say.

For example:

- Have you analysed your past visitation statistics to determine the geographic profile of visitors?
- Have you surveyed past guests as to their demographic profile and/or motivations for travel?

To best answer this part of the question, it is strongly recommended that you use a table format to answer this question, as per the example below.

Other useful tips:

- Consider what you have done differently to attract customers during this qualifying period.
- Focus on innovative approaches to marketing.
- Provide measurable outcomes.
- Include at least one strategy for each target market identified in the first section of your response.

Strategies might include:

- Aid advertising and promotional activity
- Brochures and other marketing collateral, and distribution

| GOAL | STRATEGIES | OUTCOMES |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Sydney couples aged 40+ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Target key travel writers for media famils. ■ Redevelop website and add an online booking facility. ■ Increase social media activity to engage with previous clients and attract new ones. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hosted 6 famils in 19/20, including journos from NSW Life Magazine, The Australian and The Age, valued at \$50,000 (AEV). ■ 23% bookings online in 19/20. ■ Website page views up by 20% in 19/20. Facebook friends up by 30% to 1200, engagement rate increased by 10%. |

- Sales promotions
- Public relations activities (media releases, media interviews, famils)
- Cooperative marketing activity with other operators, industry associations, regional tourist associations.
- Direct marketing
- Websites, e-marketing and social media marketing
- Participation in local, and national travel events such as ATE

4.2.5 QUESTION 4. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (10 MARKS)

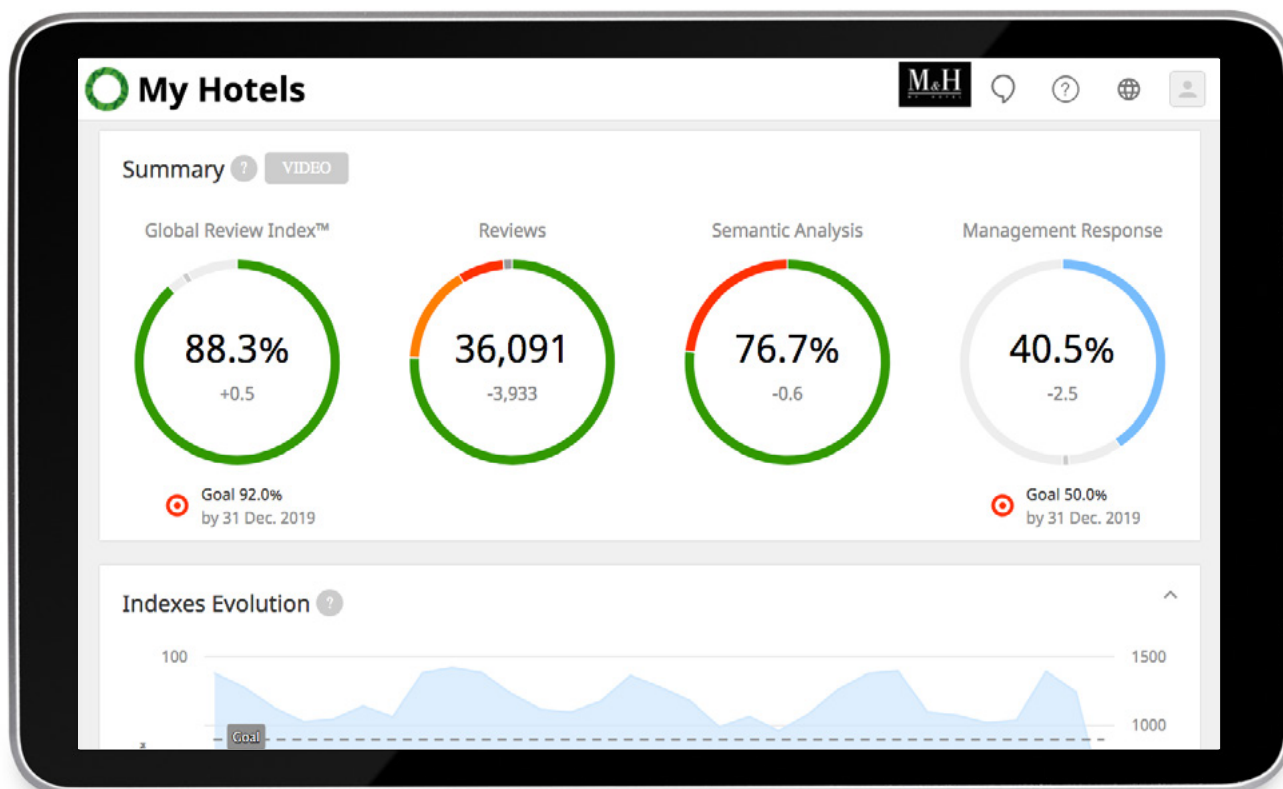
How do you provide quality visitor experiences and demonstrate inclusive practices?

YOUR ANSWER SHOULD:

- Clearly **outline the practices you have put in place to ensure the delivery of high-quality customer service throughout the visitor experience journey.**
- Start this answer by **describing your commitment to customer service** and explaining what 'great customer service' means to your business.
- Explain **how you make an effort to understand customers' needs**, and the systems and procedures you have in place to deliver outstanding customer service.
- Consider all points of customer engagement e.g. email, phone, guest greetings/welcome and interaction during and after the experience.
- Discuss any customer service initiatives that are designed to achieve great service and explain your philosophy for engaging with customers.
- For those businesses that had **significant disruption during this specific qualifying period you should consider how you provide quality customer experiences in the alternatives ways in which you operated** – communicated to customers during changing restrictions, kept customers informed during closures.

Other points you might like to consider:

- Do you have a repeat business strategy?
- Do you have Tourism Accreditation? What are the benefits of accreditation in terms of customer service?
- Do you have a TripAdvisor rating or other third-party endorsements of your service?
- What formal and informal customer service training programs do you engage in?
- Do any staff members hold formal qualifications in customer service?
- Do you have regular staff meetings?
- How do you ensure your facilities are in good working order?
- How do you supervise sales and operational areas? For example, are there cleaning guidelines, do you have a policy of responding to customer queries within 24 hours?
- When recruiting new staff, how important is customer service experience and/or attitude?



- What are your service standards for telephones and online queries? How accessible is your service?
 - Testimonials are a great way to back-up any statements you make about customer service and can be from a range of sources, not just customers (e.g. staff, suppliers, community members)
 - Demonstrate how you **actively seek and respond to customer feedback**.
- Examples of methods to actively seek feedback include:
- Feedback and/or guest comment forms
 - Guest books
 - Formal research methods such as surveys (hard copy or online) or focus groups
 - Monitoring social media, including blogs
 - Mystery shoppers
 - Informal discussions with clients
 - Word-of-mouth from external sources, such as visitor information centres, industry partners such as wholesalers, referrals from other tourism operators
 - Demonstrate how this data is used to continuously monitor and assess customer service to improve the visitor experience.

Practical examples of improvements made as a result of client feedback (either positive or negative) are ideal to include here, to illustrate the processes outlined being implemented.

REVIEWPRO

All Quality Tourism Accredited Businesses and 2021 Tourism Awards nominees have access to a complimentary [ReviewPro](#) account via the Quality Tourism Framework (QTF) dashboard.

ReviewPro is a one-stop-shop for online reputation management, that collates all reviews about your business from 175 websites into a streamlined dashboard.

This new addition to the Quality Tourism Framework is an extremely valuable tool that can be used in your Tourism Awards submission. It enables operators to generate reports and graphics that illustrate their digital presence during the qualifying period. Click [here](#) to learn more.

- **Demonstrate how you actively consider visitors' special and specific needs and recognise the needs of a diverse community.**

- This can include, but is not limited to cultural, language, physical, intellectual, dietary and other specific needs e.g. groups, special interest, LGBTQ.

You need to both identify the 'specific needs' and then explain how you cater for these needs, giving examples and/or testimonials where possible.

Specific needs might include:

- Mobility issues, including wheelchairs and walking aids
- Medical conditions such as asthma, respiratory or skin allergies
- Specific market segments, such as families with young children
- Large or special interest groups
- Impaired vision or hearing
- Dietary requirements
- Intellectual disabilities
- Business travellers
- Honeymooners/special occasion guests
- Non-English speaking visitors
- Accessibility issues
- Parking for tour buses, cars.
- Provide examples of how you catered for customers with specific needs, explain the outcome or successes. A case study would be beneficial here.

5.0

GETTING READY FOR YOUR SITE VISIT VERIFICATION

This year, all categories will undergo a Site Verification Visit excluding categories:

- 3 & 4 (Festivals & Events)
- 8 (Tourism Retail & Hire Services)
- 14 (Tourism Marketing & Campaigns).

The Tourism Awards site visit serves as a verification of the business and their visitor experience, not the awards submission. The Onsite Judge will 'verify' that the business is operating in a legitimate manner and delivering a high-quality visitor experience.

The site visit will be prearranged at a mutually convenient time and the judges have a proforma form which they work. As a condition of entry, you will be required to:

- **Be available for judges** to visit if required during August - September.

Canberra Region judging is conducted by a volunteer panel of industry peers appointed by the Canberra Region Tourism Industry. Judges are selected for their knowledge and experience and for their willingness to commit time to the Award process and are convened each year specifically for the Tourism Awards.

You (or a representative) will be required to meet with the judge for approximately one hour to conduct a site inspection of your business and potentially answer some questions (see below for more information). The remainder of the site visit is for the judge to **experience your product as a visitor/guest would**.

Site visit judges will primarily assess:

- **Initial contact and communication** with the business & interaction with staff during visit.
- **Appearance/presentation of the business** eg. premises, building and public areas, vehicles, cleanliness, atmosphere, ambience.
- **Services/facilities offered beyond the expected** to enhance the tourism experience.
- Membership with local associations/ accreditations/or participation in Awards programs & **how this is communicated with visitors and staff**.

- **Provisions for customer feedback/complaints** and how the feedback is used to improve visitor experience.
- **Evidence of inclusive practices and water, waste and energy actions** to reduce impact on environment.

The site inspection will not be scored however, written feedback from the on-site verification of your customer service & tourism product will be provided to the submission judges. Entrants will also receive this feedback from the on-site assessment in their final Feedback Report.

QTAB Accredited & Non-Accredited Entrants

If a business is **QTAB accredited** but has not undergone an onsite QTAB audit within the last 3 years OR **is not** QTAB accredited, **the site visit judge will also ask additional questions about the policies and procedures** that guide your business operations.

This requirement was introduced by ATIC in 2019 to ensure that all entries into the awards program are operating legitimately.

Where relevant, site visit judges will ask questions related to:

- Business Plan
- Marketing & Social Media plan
- HR Manual
- Customer Service Procedures
- OHS Policy
- Risk Management policy & assessment



Guests at the CRTA 2019 Tourism Awards Gala

It would be advisable to have ready access to these documents or evidence of your planning when meeting with the Onsite Judge

5.1 ONLINE REVIEW

In 2021, an Online Review will be undertaken prior to the Site Verification Visit to assess the entrant's online presence including their website, social media channels and external listing sources.

The online review will account for 10% of your overall score (for most categories). Scoring of the online review will occur at the state/territory level only.

A copy of the Online Review questions is available on the next page.

The online review will be conducted from August onwards, prior to the Site Verification Visit. We

recommend that you use this time from now until August to ensure your online presence is optimised prior to the judge's desktop assessment.

For those categories that do not require a Site Visit, a member of the CRTIC team will conduct the Online Review desktop assessment.

Entrants will need to provide the following links:

- Website
- Facebook
- TripAdvisor
- Instagram
- Google Listing URL
- Twitter (if applicable)
- Pinterest (if applicable)
- Booking.com (if applicable)

ONLINE REVIEW QUESTIONS & GUIDANCE

1. DOES THE WEBSITE PROVIDE A CLEAR OVERVIEW OF THE PRODUCT/SERVICE?

Additional support of providing a clear overview may include a selection of high-quality images, a FAQ page, relevant images and logos e.g. QTAB, Star Ratings, Industry Membership, Tourism Awards.

2. IS THE WEBSITE MOBILE OPTIMISED?

Your website should be fully responsive in design when used on a mobile phone or tablet.

3. IS THE BUSINESS ACTIVELY ENGAGED ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

The business should regularly (at least weekly) post content to one or more social media channels. This must include at least one of the accounts you have supplied your account name for in the above list.

4. DO THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES ACTIVELY PROMOTE THE REGION AND ENCOURAGE VISITATION?

There should be links to relevant destination and complementary product tourism sites on social media pages.

5. DOES THE BUSINESS REGULARLY RESPOND TO REVIEWS?

The business should respond to online reviews in a timely manner. A guide is: within 4 business days of negative feedback made, within 7 days for positive feedback made. No comment is required if just a rating is made. Review sites include TripAdvisor, Booking.com, Google and Facebook.

6. IS THE WEBSITE SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISED?

Your 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 you should appear on the second page.

7. IS THERE A CLEAR CALL TO ACTION ON THE WEBSITE?

There should be a 'book now' button or detailed contact information or booking enquiry information that is easy to find and clear.

8. DOES THEIR WEBSITE ACTIVELY PROMOTE THE REGION AND ENCOURAGE VISITATION?

There should be links to relevant destination and complementary product tourism sites on the website.

9. IS THE BUSINESS LISTED ON THE AUSTRALIAN TOURISM DATA WAREHOUSE (ATDW)?

An N/A option will be available here. If a business cannot list on ATDW then a N/A would apply and the full points for this question will be applied.

10. CAN THE ENTRANT BE FOUND ON AT LEAST TWO OTHER ONLINE BOOKING SITES FROM THEIR SUPPLIED LIST?

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, destination pages, RTO and/or visitor centre websites. A N/A can apply if online bookings are not relevant to the business type.

SCORING: Yes = 1 point No = 0 points N/A = 1 point **Total:** /10 points

5.2 WHAT IS THE SITE INSPECTION JUDGE LOOKING FOR?

As explained above, the main purpose of the site visit is for the judge to experience your product as a regular tourist would. Here are some of the things they'll be looking for:

First impressions

Parking, general access, directional signage/access, integration with general environment, initial impact and appeal, maintenance of grounds and buildings, cleanliness, rubbish management.

Product

Is it unique or outstanding, how does it compare with competitors, have there been any innovations implemented this year, has it been innovative in

packaging product, does the pricing represent value for money, does it meet customer needs and expectations?

Management and staff

Are they friendly and helpful, is their appearance appropriate, is there evidence of management, structure and training, is there evidence of awards/achievements?

Customer service

Is the initial contact friendly and proactive, what is the general atmosphere like, are there provisions for customer feedback, is there signage and interpretive information, are people with disabilities and/or special needs catered for, what are the trading hours?



Winner of the Unique Accommodation category at the 2019 Canberra Region Tourism Awards, Jamala Wildlife Lodge

Service and facilities

Does the business offer special or extra services and/or facilities to enhance the visitor experience, is there visitor information available, is there access to public facilities, are visitor needs and comfort catered for?

WH&S, Risk Management, Environmental

Is there evidence of WHS policies and procedures, emergency procedures, management of safety hazards, risk management policies and procedures, recycling of waste materials, evidence of environmental policies and procedures such as energy and water conservation?

Professionalism

What is the overall impact of the business, what is the quality of product presentation and operating standards, is there evidence of contribution to broader tourism promotion and development, staff presentation, awards received, evidence of training and interaction with other visitors?

5.3 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SITE VISIT PROCESS

- As a guide, put aside a maximum of 1.5 hours for the visit, keeping in mind the purpose is for the judges to assess the business and for verification of claims that may be made within your submission.
- It is advisable for at least two staff members to host the visit—this may include your submission writer. You may also like to call on relevant staff members where appropriate. For example, if you're talking about your sustainability policies, arrange for the relevant staff member to lead, or join in, the discussion.
- Judges will provide informal feedback (not mentoring advice) during the visit. It can be difficult to remember what valuable hints and encouragement they may give you, so to capture these points, one person could take notes or you could record the session on your phone.
- Allow the judges some time initially to look over the documentation (outlined above) – perhaps you could offer them a cup of tea or coffee while they do so. Put your best foot forward and make it easy for them with well-prepared and well-presented documents that reflect the professionalism of your business.
- Ensure your policies and plans) are up to date. Judges will focus on activities, updates and innovations that have occurred in the last 2 years which should be evident in these documents.
- While entrants are under no obligation to offer a free experience of their product, once the judges have viewed the required documentation, you may like to show them the highlights of your operation. Feel free to curate the visit so that the judges see your property in the best light. While it's enjoyable to share your business with the judges, don't forget to keep an eye on the time! Align the tour with the business highlights in qualifying period.
- Treat the judges as though they have never been to your property. Allow them to enjoy the experience you may provide, but keep in mind, they are not there to be wined and dined, rather to better understand and verify your product and business!

6.0

NEARLY THERE

By this stage your submission should be nearly complete. Great work!

BEFORE YOU SUBMIT MAKE SURE YOU HAVE:

- **Answered all parts of every question.**
Failure to answer any question, or part of that question, will automatically result in a score of zero for that question. Remember that many questions have two parts, and both parts will need to be addressed.
- **Proofread your submission – several times.**
Ask a colleague, family member or friend to proofread your submission to ensure there are no spelling or grammatical errors. Submissions which contain typos, spelling errors and grammatical errors reflect poorly on the professionalism of the business. Reading your submission out loud or having a third party read your submission can be a great way to pick up extra mistakes.
- **Checked that your submission adheres to the Rules for Entry.**

BEFORE YOU SUBMIT YOU WILL ALSO NEED TO:

- **Prepare a 100-word description of your company and/or product.**
This is submitted through the 'Media & Trophy Recipient Details' section of the Awards Online Portal and will be used for announcements at the presentation ceremony, in promotional and media materials and on website listings.
- **Prepare and upload your images**
This is done through the Media & Trophy Recipient Details' section of the Awards Online Portal.
- **Prepare 2 Hero images that illustrate your company/product.**
These will be used by the Award Owner in the presentation ceremony and official awards advertising, media and publications. These must be no bigger than 10MB each in jpeg format
- **Prepare 8 further media images that illustrate your company product.**
These will be used for media and promotions. These should be no bigger than 5MB each in jpeg format.

7.0

HANG IN THERE BECAUSE YOU'RE NEARLY DONE!

Once you have finished your submission and done your final proofreading, it is time to submit through the Awards Online Portal. If all required questions in the entry have been completed (this is indicated by the green ticks on the Awards Online Portal), the 'submit entry' button will appear. When you are happy with your submission, press 'Submit Entry' to finalise your entry.



2019 Canberra Region Tourism Awards Gala, Winners, National Arboretum Canberra

ONCE YOU HAVE SUBMITTED YOUR ENTRY NO FURTHER CHANGES CAN BE MADE, SO MAKE SURE YOU ARE COMPLETELY HAPPY WITH YOUR SUBMISSION BEFORE SUBMITTING.

Celebrate! As mentioned earlier, preparing a Canberra Region Tourism Awards submission is a significant commitment so it's time to congratulate yourself (and your team) on achieving this milestone.

Book your tickets for the Canberra Tourism Awards Event on Friday November 26 2021. The winners are kept anonymous until they are presented at the Event.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE AWARDS ARE ANNOUNCED?

Detailed feedback from the site verification visit and submission judging (all three judges) will be available via the Tourism Awards portal after the awards are announced, whether the entrant is a winner or not.

Winners in categories 1–25 go on to represent the Canberra at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards.

TEN WINNING TIPS

1. FOLLOW THE RULES OF ENTRY

The Rules of Entry have been prepared to help you answer the questions. Read these carefully and follow them closely.

2. ANSWER THE QUESTION

Your submission must answer the question asked! Do not just make statements. After you have prepared your response, go back to the question and make sure you specifically answer the questions.

3. SUBSTANTIATE YOUR CLAIMS

Make sure you substantiate all your claims. If possible, use quantitative measure such as percentages. Document your measurements wherever possible. The financial data, for example, must be verified by an independent third person, e.g. accountant, finance officer or bank manager, or you may sign a Statutory Declaration.

4. BE TOURISM FOCUSED

Remember that this is a tourism industry awards scheme! Keep your answers tourism focused. In particular, if your business spans a number of industries, be careful how you present it in the submission. For example, if your accommodation business also has a big wedding market it is only relevant to the Tourism Awards if you can clearly demonstrate how it contributes to tourism.

5. PAINT THE PICTURE

You must paint a convincing picture of your business in your submission – this means engaging the judges with your story. Write as if the reader will have no concept of your business. Never assume the judges will know your business, particularly at a national level. Get them as excited as you are!

6. BE CLEAR

Be as clear as possible in your submission. Make it as easy as possible for the judges to understand what you are trying to say by being concise and focused.

7. TELL THE WHOLE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT

The judges come from the tourism industry. The Canberra Region judges will visit your operation, and the national judges will rely on the CRTA judges' inspection reports on your property. They know when they read an exaggerated claim and it does not lend credibility to your entry.

8. PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

Too frequently good information is overlooked. Make sure you put the good news in your entry. Highlight areas of strength, creativity, innovation and flair in relation to your contribution to the tourism industry.

9. BUT DON'T OVERDO IT

Keep it simple. There is no correlation between the amount of money spent on a submission and its likelihood of success. The largest businesses do not always win the category. Each entry is assessed in terms of its achievements and contribution and assessed against criteria. Small operators are as likely to win as the big ones.

10. USE SUPPORTING MATERIAL

Supporting material adds to your case. Tables, graphs, and diagrams: these provide a snapshot of growth and trends and assist the judges in assessing your claims. Ensure you accompany each diagram with a clear explanation. Images: make sure your photographs are attractive and are taken close enough to give a favourable impression of your organisation. Give some thought to the quality and relevance of your photographs. Does your supporting material provide evidence of statements, or have you included it 'just in case'?



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS



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DISCLAIMER: The rules and guidance of this handbook are correct as at the time of publication, July 2021. Content may alter due to changes in circumstances.
For further information, please contact the Canberra Region Tourism Awards Manager (see page 2)