



Queensland Top Tourism Town and Top Tour Guide Awards

2026 Entrant Guidebook



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2026 Awards Timeline

Monday, 9 February	Nominations Open
Monday, 9 March	Nominations Close Complete a nomination online (name, contact, category, details) and make your entry fee payment.
Friday, 10 April	Submissions Due Submit your entry in the awards portal.
Friday, 8 May	Finalists Announced Entrants who receive a score of 75% or above will proceed to the public vote (for towns) and the interviews (for tour guides).
Monday, 11 May - Sunday, 24 May	Public Vote (For Towns) All finalist towns will be sent a voting kit with a QR code to the voting page hosted on the QTIC website.
Mid May	Finalist Interviews (For Guides) All finalist guides will take part in a virtual interview with our panel of judges. All questions will be sent prior for any preparation.
Mid June	Winners Announced Queensland winners of the Top Tourism Town categories and Top Tour Guide category will be announced.

Awards Overview and Categories

The Awards aim to recognise and showcase towns and tour guides that work together with their tourism operators, businesses, and local community to make their destination the best it can be. They must offer a memorable visitor experience, demonstrate a strong commitment to tourism, and encourage increased visitation.

Categories and criteria are set by the Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC), providing a consistent framework for the Awards nationally. Queensland **gold winners** in each category go on to represent the state at the national awards where they could be named Australia's Top Tourism Town or Guide.

Categories:

- 1. Top Tourism Town – those with a population over 5,000**
- 2. Top Small Tourism Town – those with a population between 1,500 and 5,000**
- 3. Top Tiny Tourism Town – those with a population below 1,500**

(Census data from the [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#) should be used to determine population size.)

- 4. Top Tour Guide - the nominating organisation must have, or be in the process of obtaining, a QTAB Sustainable Accreditation to nominate.**



Nomination Process

Who can Nominate?

Towns: Nominations will be accepted by accredited Visitor Information Centres, Local Councils or a Tourism Association that holds QTF Tourism Association Certification.

We encourage nominees to work with their Regional Tourism Organisation, Local Tourism Organisation, or a committed group of local operators. Nominations are open to any city* or town, specifically relating to geographical towns and population centres, not Local Government Areas. QTIC will have ultimate discretion to accept only one nomination from each town.

**Brisbane is not eligible to enter the Top Tourism Town Awards.*

Guides: Eligibility includes tour guides and coach captains working in the natural, cultural and heritage environments, in either a paid or volunteer capacity. Entries are open to guides employed by, or contracted to, a tourism business, as well as sole traders operating under their own business name, however nominations will only be accepted by [QTAB Sustainable accredited organisations](#). If your business is not accredited but you would like to nominate a tour guide to enter the awards, you will need to become accredited by the close of nominations date.

How to Nominate

To nominate, visit the [online awards portal](#) where you can create an account. If you have entered the awards previously, your login details will remain the same. If you need to add or update an email address linked to your company's account, please contact awards@qtic.com.au.

NEW: Tour Guides must provide a letter of reference in their nomination that includes

- Relationship with the nominee
- Summary of the Guide's role, tour, company
- What you want to endorse as the Guide's strengths and skills
- 1-2 specific Examples
- Reason for nominating them

Entry Fee

QTIC Member: \$190 incl. gst

QTIC Non-Member: \$380 incl. gst

Terms and Conditions: All withdrawals not submitted by 5pm 9 March (Nominations Closing) will not receive a refund of their nomination fee.

Finalists

A panel of three judges will review the submissions and score individually. The three scores are then combined and averaged to determine the submission score. Entrants that reach a score of 75% will be deemed a finalist and progress to the public voting component for towns and the interview component for tour guides. The public vote occurs at the State level only and is worth 10 points.

Hall of Fame

The Hall of Fame is awarded to a town that has won the same category over three consecutive years. If a town is inducted into the National Hall of Fame in the Top Tourism Town Awards, they are precluded from entering at a state level for a period of two years in the Top Tourism Town Awards.



Scoring Breakdown:
 Submission - 70 Points
 Public Vote - 10 Points
 GRI - 20 Points

Top Tourism Town Submission

Word Count: max. 4,600 words

Component	Points	Questions
Media and Promotional	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The name/details of the person who will accept the awards at the Awards Presentation should you win the category. The name/details of the person who will be corresponding with the media should you win the category. A separate 100-word description about your town for promotional purposes. Two (2) hero images (high resolution, PNG preferred) that best depict your entry and can be used for media and promotional purposes Three (3) additional supporting images
Town Introduction (up to 800 words)	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide details of the town (name, region, population) Provide an overview of the town's commitment to tourism (5 points) Provide a description of the town's chosen target market for the submission and justification of why this target market was chosen. (5 points) <p><i>Judges are looking for:</i></p> <p>→ The town is able to demonstrate that they have a commitment to growing tourism</p> <p>→ Target market is clearly identified, and rationale of target market is clear and sound</p>
Editorial Article and Images (up to 800 words)	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a short editorial style feature article on why people should visit your town or city and what they could experience during their visit. You must submit a PDF version of the article alongside the written text in the portal. (16 Points) <p><i>Judges are looking for:</i></p> <p>→ Thought, style and theme of the writing is of high quality and in the style of a feature article.</p> <p>→ Writing has been directed to the visitor</p> <p>→ Theme is consistent with specified target market and the video and itinerary supplied.</p> <p>→ The theme reflects the brand and values of the town</p> <p>→ A compelling and enjoyable proposition for the specified market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The article <u>must</u> be accompanied by six (6) high resolution PNG images (free of copyright) (4 Points) <p><i>Judges are looking for:</i></p> <p>→ Photos are shot in a creative way to evoke an emotional response.</p> <p>→ Photos and editorial are connected.</p> <p>→ Are of a semi-professional standard</p>

Video <i>(30 seconds - 2 minutes in length)</i>	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a 30 sec - 2 minute promotional video which highlights the key attractions and experiences in your town. The video must be filmed in high definition, using a scale of 16:9. Only videos uploaded to YouTube with a URL provided will be accepted. Videos must also be available for download by the Awards Team (e.g. via Dropbox, WeTransfer etc.) for a period of up to 6 months. The video must be suitable for public viewing and cannot infringe on the intellectual property, privacy, publicity, ownership or any other legal or moral rights of any third party. (20 Points) <p><i>Judges are looking for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The video concept is creative and evokes an emotional response → The video connects to the editorial and itinerary → The video speaks to the target market & reflects the brand and values of the town → Narrative and imagery are connected e.g. the story/description/voice over is connected to what is being viewed throughout the video → Key attractions and experiences are shown. → Production of the video is of high quality. → The town is at the centre of the concept.
Itinerary <i>(up to 3,000 words)</i>	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please provide an itinerary for your defined target market including both accommodation and activities, along with any significant visitor sites, for the exact number of days/nights as per your category requirements (listed below). Entries can use product/s from within the shire/region, however visitors must be able to reasonably access during their stay. A PDF version of the itinerary must be submitted alongside the written text in the portal. (20 Points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Top Tourism Town: 4 days/3 nights ■ Small Tourism Town: 3 days/2 nights ■ Tiny Tourism Town: 2 days/1 night <p><i>Judges are looking for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Theme of itinerary is consistent with specified target market → Theme of itinerary reflects the brand and values of the town that have been identified in the video and editorial → A range of experiences/attractions are presented, with seasonality noted, if applicable → An achievable, compelling and enjoyable proposition that entices the reader to visit

GRI Score	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please provide the name and TripAdvisor* URLs for the accommodation and attractions in your town as per your category requirements (listed below). (20 Points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Top Towns – 5 of each (accommodation/attraction) ▪ Small Towns – 3 of each (accommodation/attraction) ▪ Tiny Towns – 2 of each (accommodation/attraction) <p><i>*Links from alternative online review sources such as Google Reviews, Booking.com etc are also accepted.</i></p> <p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The scores for the attractions and accommodation are combined and averaged to provide a town GRI. → You must have approval from each accommodation/attraction for us to create a ReviewPro account and access the GRI scores. → Each accommodation/attraction chosen must have at least 25 reviews in the period of 1 March 2025 to 28 Feb 2026 to obtain a score. Those who do not will contribute zero (0) points towards your town's average. → Tiny Tourism nominees can use attractions within their shire/region, where a visitor is reasonably able to access the attraction during their stay. Please seek approval from your State Program Managers prior.
Consumer Vote	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrants that reach a score of 75% or more on their submission will be deemed finalists and progress to the consumer vote. Hosted on the QTIC website, members of the public can vote for one town in each category (top, small and tiny). This score is not applied at a national level. (10 Points)



Top Tour Guide Submission

Word Count: between 3,000 and 5000 words

Component	Points	Questions
Overview of Nominee (up to 500 words)	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a brief history of your career in tour guiding, highlighting your outstanding attributes that enhance your guiding. Include a brief description of your current employment/volunteer work. <p>Note: this is not included in the overall word count.</p>
Tour Plan of Nominee (1500 words)	15	<p>In reference to a tour you have recently delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give details about the tour; include information such as: type of tour, group size, location, duration, frequency, your involvement in its design and the involvement of other people (5 Marks) Give details of the objectives of the tour; what is the target audience and what messages and stories you use to create the visitor experience (10 Marks)
Tour Delivery of Nominee (1500 words)	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give details of any innovations in design and presentation techniques that you use to create a special, distinctive and memorable experience for clients (7 Marks) Give examples of how your tour promotes sustainability, with a focus on at least two of: cultural, social, or environmental approaches (8 Marks)
Evaluation & Customer Service (1500 words)	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how you evaluate and ensure a standard of quality in the customer service you, personally, provide. Provide evidence of customer satisfaction e.g. online reviews, social media comments, letters of appreciation, visitor book comments, surveys etc. (5 marks) Discuss the kind of changes/improvements you have made to the way you deliver the tour experience on listening to this feedback (5 marks) How do you identify and cater to people with specific needs? (specific needs could include language, culture, physical, cognitive, amongst others) (5 marks)
Improving Skills (500 words)	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What training and development have you undertaken in the last three years to extend your skills as a guide? Can you upload any certification as proof? (5 marks)
Interview	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrants that reach a minimum score of 75% on their submission will progress to the interview portion. Questions will be supplied to the entrant prior to the interview.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I become a QTIC member to receive the member price nomination fee?

To become a [QTIC member](#), please reach out to memberships@qtic.com.au

My town does not have a Visitor Information Centre - how can I nominate?

A Visitor Centre may nominate multiple towns within its catchment should a nearby town not have a traditional Visitor Centre.

How do I vote when the public voting opens?

The public vote will be run through the QTIC website. Promotional material (links, QR codes etc) will be provided to town finalists before the public voting opens.

How is the ReviewPro/GRI score calculated?

ReviewPro is an online reputation management platform that aggregates online reviews from over 175 online travel agencies (OTAs) and review sites. The industry-standard Global Review Index (GRI) is an online reputation score, which takes online reviews and gives a business a score out of 100.

Have more questions?

Please contact the awards team at awards@qtic.com.au