



# 2025 Queensland Tourism Awards Entrant Guidebook

*The Ultimate Step-by-Step Guide to Navigating the 2025 Awards Process*

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

QTIC acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Queensland. We recognise those who shared stories, welcomed guests on Country, and were stewards of the earth for millennia before us, and their continued connection to land, waterways, and culture.

## **About the Queensland Tourism Industry Council**

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) is Queensland's peak tourism industry body and the leading advocate for Queensland's tourism and hospitality sector. QTIC represents the interests of the state's more than 60,000 tourism businesses and more than 800 members across Queensland working in all sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry.

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# 2025 Awards Timeline

10am Tuesday 1 April	<p><b>Nominations Open</b></p> <p>Complete a nomination online (name, contact, category, details) and make your entry fee payment.</p>
5pm Friday 9 May	<p><b>Nominations Close</b></p>
Early - Late June	<p><b>Virtual Site Visits</b></p> <p>A Judge will reach out to schedule an online Business Verification Meeting.</p>
5pm Monday 9 June	<p><b>Business/Accom Standards Due</b></p> <p>For businesses that aren't QTAB accredited or star-rated, the business standards and/or accommodation standards must be submitted with ample time for our accreditation team to assess. You will not be able to submit your awards submission unless these have been approved.</p>
June (Date TBC)	<p><b>QTA Webinar</b></p> <p>"How to Shine" Webinar hosted by our Chair of Judges</p>
5pm Thursday 14 August	<p><b>Submissions Due</b></p>
Mid - Late September (Dates TBC)	<p><b>RACQ People's Choice Public Voting</b></p> <p>All entrants in categories 1-26 are automatically entered into our RACQ People's Choice Awards split across 'Accommodation' or 'Experiences or Services'. A voting kit will be emailed to you to help you prepare.</p>
Friday 14 November	<p><b>Gala Event</b></p> <p>Winners will be announced at the 40th anniversary of the Queensland Tourism Awards at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.</p>
March 2026	<p><b>Australian Tourism Awards</b></p> <p>Gold Winners of categories 1-26 qualify as Australian Tourism Awards finalists. The National Award Winners will be announced at the Australian Tourism Awards in March of 2026.</p>

# Awards Overview and Categories

The Queensland Tourism Awards are the pinnacle of excellence in our state's tourism industry. For 40 years, the awards have celebrated exceptional industry accomplishments, honouring the finest individuals, businesses, and events across Queensland. Winners and finalists are announced at the industry's night of nights – the annual Queensland Tourism Awards Gala Ceremony. **Gold winners** in categories 1 - 26 advance to the [Australian Tourism Awards](#), as these fall under a National Framework provided by the Australian Tourism Industry Council.

 Please find a description of the categories and their individual question sets [here](#).

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Major Tourist Attractions                                    | 20. Self Contained Accommodation   |
| 2. Tourist Attractions  | 21. 3-3.5 Star Accommodation   |
| 3. Major Festivals and Events                                   | 22. 4-4.5 Star Deluxe Accommodation  |
| 4. Festivals and Events   | 23. 5 Star Luxury Accommodation  |
| 5. The Steve Irwin Award for Ecotourism                         | 24. New Tourism Business   |
| 6. Cultural Tourism   | 25. Excellence in Food Tourism   |
| 7. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Experiences    | 26. Excellence in Accessible Tourism   |
| 8. Tourism Retail, Hire and Services                            | 27. Outstanding Contribution by a Volunteer or Volunteer Group                 |
| 9. Visitor Information Services                                 | 28. The Stephen Gregg Award for Young Achiever of the Year                     |
| 10. Business Event Venues                                       | 29. The Marie Watson-Blake Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual |
| 11. Major Tour and Transport Operators                          | 30 & 31. RACQ People's Choice Awards (Accommodation and Experience/Services)   |
| 12. Tour and Transport Operators                                |  |
| 13. Adventure Tourism   |  |
| 14. The Richard Power Award for Tourism Marketing and Campaigns |  |
| 15. Tourism Restaurants and Catering Services                   |  |
| 16. Tourism Wineries, Distilleries and Breweries                |  |
| 17. Caravan and Holiday Parks                                   |  |
| 18. Hosted Accommodation  |  |
| 19. Unique Accommodation  |  |

*All entrants in categories 1-26 (excl. cat 14) will be automatically entered into the RACQ People's Choice Awards. Entrants will be divided into two categories: Accommodation and Experiences & Services.*

# Nomination Process

The nomination process is a brief registration of intent to enter the Queensland Tourism Awards. It involves filling out a few details (Business name, description, number of employees etc.) and paying the nomination fee. If you are entering more than one category, a separate entry must be submitted for each.

Entrants may only enter one nomination in any one of the following categories: Attractions - category 1 or 2, Festivals and Events - category 3 or 4, Tour Operator - category 11 or 12, Accommodation - category 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 or 23. Step 1)

## Step 1)


Before nominating, please carefully read the [Rules and Regulations](#) document.

### ★ Hall of Fame Rules ★

*HOF will be presented to entrants who have won their category for three consecutive years. They can continue entering the same category until HOF is reached nationally. Once an entrant is inducted into the National HOF, they cannot enter that category in QLD for two years.*

## Step 2)

Once you've chosen your category (or categories), please nominate via the national Online Awards Portal [www.online.qualitytourismaustralia.com](http://www.online.qualitytourismaustralia.com) 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](mailto:awards@qtic.com.au).

 Please ensure the details you enter when nominating present exactly how you wish to be listed on websites, certificates, at the Gala dinner and in any media promotion.

[Nominate Here!](#)

### Step 3)

Once you have entered your nomination into the portal, you will have see the message "Please make payment for your unpaid nominations in order to proceed" under "Pending Actions". After the fee has been paid, you will be able to commence your Queensland Tourism Awards Submission.

Entry Fees (incl. GST)	Under 25 Employees	25 plus employees
QTIC Member	\$ 190	\$ 230
QTIC Non-member	\$ 380	\$ 460

*Terms and Conditions: All withdrawals not submitted by 5pm 9 May (Nominations Closing) will not receive a refund of their nomination fee. Classification of "QTIC member" does not cover businesses or organisations with "regional QTIC membership" through their Regional Tourism Organisation.*



# Business and Accommodation Standards

The Business and/or Accommodation Standards, relevant to your category, must be completed as they guarantee a minimum standard in your business management. Your answers do not contribute to your final score but will be reviewed by our Accreditation Team to ensure your eligibility into the awards program. These must be submitted by Monday 9th June to give ample time for our accreditation team to assess.

✔ *Entrants who are Accredited through the [Sustainable Tourism Accreditation Program](#) will not be required to complete the Business Standards*

★ *Entrants who are Star Rated through [Star Ratings Australia](#) will not be required to complete the Accommodation Standards*

## **Business Standards**

This business standards are a direct copy of QTIC's Sustainable Tourism Accreditation questions and covers the best standards for tourism businesses across all aspects of sustainable tourism operations, including:

- Environmental Management
- Social & Cultural Responsibility
- Codes of Ethics and Professional Conduct
- Customer Service, Safety & Protection
- Staff Wellness and Human Resources
- Sustainable Business Operation
- Social and Regulatory Licencing Compliance
- Sustainable Tourism Marketing & Promotion

## **Accommodation Standards**

To qualify for accommodation categories 17-23 (except for Unique Accommodation), you need to meet a specific Star Rating. You can do this by completing a Star Ratings pre-assessment module, which will calculate your proposed rating. For example, if you're entering the 5 Star Accommodation category, your pre-assessment rating must be 5 stars to be accepted.

### **Looking for Guidance?**

Feeling a bit confused? Don't worry! The awards portal will guide you through both the Business Standards and Accommodation Standards, explaining exactly what you need to provide. A green tick will appear once each section is completed. If you have any questions about this section of the awards, feel free to reach out to QTIC's Accreditation Team at

✉ [accreditation@qtic.com.au](mailto:accreditation@qtic.com.au)



# Preparing for your Awards Submission


If you have entered the Awards before, please critically review your judges' feedback.

Substantiating your claims with evidence is a must throughout your submission, so be sure to include examples, ensuring they relate to the qualifying period (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025). All activities, achievements and innovations referred to within your submission must have occurred within this period. You can refer to past results if relevant, but only if it helps you to answer the question and demonstrate growth.

You can refer to items such as:

- Your Business Plan, Marketing Plan and Customer Service Policy
- 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. Identify areas which require particular attention and a system for addressing feedback)
- Copies of PR activity and media coverage achieved during the qualifying period
- Details of marketing and advertising activity, and results of activity (refer to collateral including brochures, media releases, blogs, engaging social media posts, images, newsletters, media clippings, PR)
- Statistics on website traffic and social media usage
- OHS and Risk Management Policies and Procedures
- Staff development and training policies, and information on activities that took place during the qualifying period
- Information on environmental initiatives and performance
- Ways in which your operation has contributed to the local economy during the qualifying period i.e employment, purchase of good and services, events etc.
- Goals, strategies and outcomes for the qualifying period
- Systems you use to record data e.g. visitor numbers, bookings etc. (generating a report which reveals trends and tallies relevant to the qualifying period is very helpful)

# Breaking Down Each Component of a Submission

 **\*There are new changes for 2025!\* Please read this carefully**

## Word Count

For categories 1 – 25, the written submission has a word limit of [4,000 - 7,500 words](#).

To ensure you are using your word count wisely, the judges recommend writing a minimum of 100 words for each point. For example, if a question is worth 4 points, your response should be a minimum of 400 words. Please ensure you are not using hyphens or slashes to sneak in more words, as points will be deducted.

## Images

Submissions can include up to [30 Images](#) (including infographics, diagrams, charts, graphs, and pictures) and are linked throughout your written responses rather than inserted into the text boxes. Images and testimonials throughout your submission will help break it up and add substance to your response. Please make sure they are relevant and easy to interpret.

The images uploaded in the Media and Promotional section will be used for promotional material and screen media for the night and are not included in the image count. The image captions are also not included in your overall word count, unless they exceed 10 words.

It is a requirement that images are to be used to further support your written response and not to convey key points. A good rule of thumb to use is 'if the images were removed, would my written submission still answer the question?'

## Written Submission

In your written responses, please don't assume local knowledge as your judge may not be familiar with your region or community (particularly if you move on to nationals). Quotes and evidence that substantiate your answers are great to include in your submission. Carefully read the questions and make sure to follow the guides that are included in the question sets.

## Digital Review

A businesses' digital/online presence is an important consumer touch point and plays a significant factor to overall business success. The Digital Review accounts for **20 Points** of your overall score. Please find a copy of the standard online questions below.

*Note: Categories 14 and 26 have separate online review question sets. These will be linked in your example submission responses guide.*

Question	Points
<b>Website</b>	
Does the Website Provide a clear overview of the product/service?	1
Is there a clear call to action on the website?	1
Does the website communicate their sustainability/positive impact initiatives?	1
Is a Sustainability Plan/Climate Action Plan/Emission Reduction Action Plan available via the website?	1
Is there is a dedicated section/page within the website which promotes/explains the Accessibility of the product/service?	1
Is an Accessibility Guide/AIAP/DAIP/Video available via the website?	1
Is the website compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)?	1
Is the website search engine optimised?	1
Does the website actively promote the entrant's region and encourage visitation?	1
<b>Social Media and Online Reviews</b>	
Was the business actively engaged on social media throughout the qualifying period?	2
Do their social media pages actively promote the region and encourage visitation?	1
Did the business regularly respond to their online reviews within the qualifying period?	2


Question	Points
<b>External Online Sources</b>	
Is the business listed on ATDW?	2
Does the business have a Google Business Profile (also known as Google My Business)?	2
Can the entrant be found on at least two other online booking/listing sites?	2
<b>Total Points Available</b>	<b>20</b>



## Consumer Review / GRI Score (Global Review Index)

Your GRI Score is provided by [ReviewPro](#) and is worth between **5 and 20 points** (please see table on next page).

ReviewPro is an online reputation management tool that collects reviews from over 175 travel websites. The Global Review Index (GRI) is a score out of 100 that measures a business's online reputation based on these reviews. This score is then converted into points for your category. For example, if your GRI is 95, you would get 19 points out of 20.

 A minimum of 25 reviews must have been received between July 1 2024 - June 31st 2025 to formulate a score. Businesses that do not have a GRI will receive a score of 0 for consumer rating.

 When you nominate, you will need to request a [ReviewPro](#) account. There will be a tick box stating "Request rewiwpro activation" which you will need to tick so your score can link to the awards portal.

## Virtual Site Visits or Business Verification Meetings

In 2025, QLD will be implementing Virtual Site Visits, worth **20 points** (excluding category 24, where a virtual site visit is conducted but is worth 0 points). Site Visits are not conducted for categories: 3, 4, 14 and 27-31.

A member of the Judging Panel will be allocated to your business, and they will contact you to arrange a suitable day/time for the online meeting (throughout June). A representative from your business will be required to meet with the judge for approximately one hour to conduct a virtual site inspection of your business and to run through some questions.

You are welcome to ask questions, however Judges will only provide general advice and are not permitted to provide specific information on how to answer a question. Please note, the Judge who conduct the meeting will not necessarily read/judge your written submission.

## Points Breakdown

The following pages break down the scoring and the word/image allocation for each category

Category	Word Count	Image Count	Written Submission	Digital Review	GRI	Virtual Site Visit	Total Points
01. Major Tourist Attractions	4,000 - 7,500	30	60	20	20	20	<b>120</b>
02. Tourist Attractions	4,000 - 7,500	30	60	20	20	20	<b>120</b>
03. Major Festivals and Events	4,000 - 7,500	30	80	20	N/A	N/A	<b>100</b>
04. Festivals and Events	4,000 - 7,500	30	80	20	N/A	N/A	<b>100</b>
05. The Steve Irwin Award for Ecotourism	4,000 - 7,500	30	80	20	N/A	20	<b>120</b>
06. Cultural Tourism	4,000 - 7,500	30	80	20	N/A	20	<b>120</b>
07. Award for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism	4,000 - 7,500	30	70	20	N/A	20	<b>110</b>
08. Tourism Retail, Hire and Services	4,000 - 7,500	30	60	20	N/A	20	<b>100</b>
09. Visitor Information Services	4,000 - 7,500	30	75	20	5	20	<b>120</b>
10. Business Event Venues	4,000 - 7,500	30	60	20	N/A	20	<b>100</b>
11. Major Tour and Transport Operators	4,000 - 7,500	30	60	20	20	20	<b>120</b>
12. Tour and Transport Operators	4,000 - 7,500	30	60	20	20	20	<b>120</b>
13. Adventure Tourism	4,000 - 7,500	30	60	20	20	20	<b>120</b>
14. The Richard Power Award for Tourism Marketing and Campaigns	4,000 - 7,500	30	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>50</b>
15. Tourism Restaurants and Catering Services	4,000 - 7,500	30	60	20	20	20	<b>120</b>

Category	Word Count	Image Count	Written Submission	Digital Review	GRI	Virtual Site Visit	Total Points
16. Tourism Wineries, Distilleries and Breweries	4,000 - 7,500	30	60	20	20	20	<b>120</b>
17. Caravan and Holiday Parks	4,000 - 7,500	30	60	20	20	20	<b>120</b>
18. Hosted Accommodation	4,000 - 7,500	30	60	20	20	20	<b>120</b>
19. Unique Accommodation	4,000 - 7,500	30	60	20	20	20	<b>120</b>
20. Self Contained Accommodation	4,000 - 7,500	30	60	20	20	20	<b>120</b>
21. 3-3.5 Star Accommodation	4,000 - 7,500	30	60	20	20	20	<b>120</b>
22. 4-4.5 Star Deluxe Accommodation	4,000 - 7,500	30	60	20	20	20	<b>120</b>
23. 5 Star Luxury Accommodation	4,000 - 7,500	30	60	20	20	20	<b>120</b>
24. New Tourism Business	4,000 - 7,500	30	80	20	N/A	0	<b>100</b>
25. Excellence in Food Tourism	4,000 - 7,500	30	60	20	5	20	<b>105</b>
26. Excellence in Accessible Tourism	4,000	10	40	10	10	20	<b>120</b>
27. Outstanding Contribution by a Volunteer or Volunteer Group	2,500	10	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>50</b>
28. The Stephen Gregg Award for Young Achiever of the Year	2,500	10	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>50</b>
29. The Marie Watson-Blake Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual	2,500	10	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>50</b>
30 & 31. RACQ People's Choice Awards - Accommodation & Experiences and Services	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

# Entrant Assistance

For further guidance, the below are available:

- [6 Steps to Nominate for QTA](#): A short YouTube video is available for first-time or newer entrants, giving a quick breakdown of the timeline of entering the Queensland Tourism Awards.
- Example Submission Responses: QTIC have developed examples for each category of what to include in high-quality written responses. You will receive a copy of this when you nominate. If you require a copy please reach out to [awards@qtic.com.au](mailto:awards@qtic.com.au)
- 10 Top Tips: This PowerPoint serves as a convenient reference guide, particularly tailored for those who are less experienced or new to this endeavor. The checklist provided aligns with the primary categories' inquiries and is designed to assist all participants. You will receive a copy of this when you nominate. If you require a copy please reach out to [awards@qtic.com.au](mailto:awards@qtic.com.au)
- [Paid Submission Reviewers and Writers](#): Entrants have the option to use a paid submission writer or submission reviewer. It is up to the entrant to reach out and discuss price, timeline etc.

**We are here to help! If you have any questions at any stage, please reach out to the team at [awards@qtic.com.au](mailto:awards@qtic.com.au)**





# FAQ's

## **What are the RACQ People's Choice Awards?**

Thanks to the support of RACQ, all entrants who have entered a submission in categories 1-26 (except Cat. 14), will automatically be entered into an RACQ People's Choice Award. The RACQ People's Choice Awards are split over two categories – Experiences/Services and Accommodation - with voting open to the public and managed by RACQ. These two categories will be completely independent from the judging process and will come down to consumer choice – tourism operators will be able to connect with visitors and followers to encourage them to vote. Voting will open in September, after submissions have closed. More details will follow.

Note: Hall of Fame Awards – a business that wins three years in a row will be placed into the QTA Hall of Fame. A Gold winner only will be announced for both RACQ Award categories based on the highest number of votes they each receive.

## **Do you announce finalists prior to the Gala Awards Ceremony?**

No. The Queensland Tourism Awards do not have finalists, so no finalists are announced prior to the Gala Awards Ceremony. Queensland follows the national structure of Gold, Silver and Bronze winners, which are announced during the Gala Awards Ceremony.

# FAQ's

## Why should I enter the Queensland Tourism Awards?

- Improve planning, development and internal analysis for your tourism business;
- Discover the full potential of your business;
- Gain a competitive edge by receiving feedback from industry leaders; • Energise and motivate your staff;
- Use your submission as a benchmark to improve your bottom line; • Receive media publicity and exposure;
- Celebrate and network with industry peers and colleagues at the Gala Ceremony;
- Encourage the continual raising of standards among Queensland tourism operators through accreditation and certification. What additional benefits does a Gold Winner receive?
- Access to professional photo/s of trophy recipient holding trophy.
- Inclusion in all QTIC media releases which is distributed to an extensive media list following the Gala Ceremony.
- Exposure through QTIC social media channels during/after the Gala Ceremony.
- All winners (Gold, Silver and Bronze) will receive a winner's logo to distribute as they wish for additional exposure and credibility.
- For gold winners in categories 1-26, they will receive additional media exposure via QTIC media releases and social media content for becoming finalists into the Australian Tourism Awards (If you then go on to win, you will gain even more media exposure on a state and national level).

**Have more questions? Please contact the QTA team at [awards@qtic.com.au](mailto:awards@qtic.com.au).**

