WRITING WINNING TOURISM AWARD SUBMISSIONS
TILMA TOOLKIT
ABOUT TILMA GROUP

THE DESTINATION FOR REGIONAL TOURISM AND EVENT SERVICES

Tilma Group is a boutique tourism and events agency based in Wagga Wagga in NSW and Toowoomba in Qld.

Operating since 2008, we pride ourselves on providing a first-class, personalised service to every client.

We have built our reputation on this promise combined with our many years of tourism, events, marketing and public relations experience.

Tilma Group is proud to work with Local Government Shires and Councils, national corporations, regional tourism organisations, tourism operators, not-for-profits, community organisations, business chambers of commerce and private enterprises.

Our agency has a regional focus and works with businesses and organisations of all sizes primarily in regional NSW and Queensland.

Our services focus on:

- Destination Marketing
- Event Management
- Tourism Development
- PR and Social Media
- Award and Grant Submissions

Tilma Group has a reputation for understanding the challenges and opportunities for tourism in regional areas. With their creative insights, intuitive marketing and professional event management know-how, Tilma Group consistently delivers beyond our expectations.

- David Sheldon, Elm Cottage
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ABOUT THE TOURISM AWARDS

The Tourism Awards celebrate and acknowledge tourism excellence; promoting and rewarding tourism businesses that demonstrate outstanding achievement and success throughout the year. The award categories showcase a range of tourism products and businesses that provide outstanding service and experiences to guests.

The criteria and categories of the Tourism Awards are set by the Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) and winners from selected categories automatically progress to the National level at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards where they are judged against the best from each State and Territories.

ACCORDING TO QTIC, THE QUEENSLAND TOURISM AWARDS AIM TO:

- Publicly recognise and reward excellence within the industry;
- Support improved business planning, development and internal analysis for tourism operators;
- Provide a benchmark for best practice within the tourism industry;
- Reinforce the value of the tourism industry;
- Encourage the continual raising of standards among tourism operators in Queensland;
- Promote an annual platform of celebration for the industry and offer networking opportunities for operators, supporters and sponsors alike;
- Highlight the prominence of Queensland in the Australian tourism industry; and
- Provide an opportunity for successful entrants to progress to the Australian Tourism Awards and compete on a national level.

The following table identifies the benefits directly associated with tourism awards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional, State &amp; National Tourism Awards</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Business/Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publicly recognise and reward excellence</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow applicants to access feedback and advice from industry leaders</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present an opportunity for key staff and supporters to attend the awards, network and celebrate</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heighten staff motivation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are an effective professional development tool that increase business acumen among senior and middle management</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a benchmark for best practices within the tourism industry</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote business planning and the annual review of business goals and achievements</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognise the full potential of a business including areas for improvement and/or development</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide exclusive marketing and PR opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase brand awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinforce the value of and consumer confidence in the tourism industry</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable successful applicants to progress to the next stage i.e from regional, to state and onto national level</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NSW Tourism Awards (nswtourismawards.com)
IMPORTANT DATES:

2016 OUTBACK TOURISM AWARDS & SYMPOSIUM
(Hosted by Barcoo Shire Council)
Nominations - Now open!
Closing Date for Nominations - May 1
Written Submissions Due - August 31
Awards Presentation and Symposium - 3-6 November, Barcoo

QUEENSLAND TOURISM AWARDS
Nominations Open - March
Closing Date for Nominations - May
Entries/Written Submissions Due - August
2016 Queensland Tourism Awards Ceremony - Friday 11 November 2016, Brisbane

QANTAS AUSTRALIAN TOURISM AWARDS
The state award winners progress automatically to the national awards
Awards Presentation Night - Early February 2017

AWARD CATEGORIES:

OQTA CATEGORIES
1. Visitor Information Services
2. Destination Marketing
3. Tourism Restaurant & Catering Services
4. Caravan & Holiday Parks
5. Best Outback Queensland Pub*
6. Hosted Accommodation
7. Standard Accommodation
8. Local Government Award for Tourism*
9. Festivals and Events
10. Cultural Tourism
11. Outstanding Contribution by a Volunteer or Group*
12. Tourist Attractions
13. Tour and Transport Operators
14. Young Achievers Award*
15. Hall of Fame*
16. Lifetime Membership*
17. Vince Evert Award*
18. Outback Mate Award*- an everyday local doing great things for the Outback visitor experience.

Nominations for this Award will have an extended deadline and more info on how to nominate someone will be available in April.

* Local award only
Important for 2016!

A number of category descriptors have now changed. It is important that entrants read the descriptor (located at the top of the category criteria) before selecting a category, to ensure eligibility.

If you refer to last year’s criteria in your submission, you will lose points when your entry is assessed by the judges.

QTA CATEGORIES
1. Major Tourist Attractions
2. Tourist Attractions
3. Major Festivals and Events
4. Festivals and Events
5. The Steve Irwin Award for Ecotourism
6. Cultural Tourism
7. Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Tourism
8. Specialised Tourism Services
9. Visitor Information Services
10. Business Event Venues
11. Major Tour and Transport Operators
12. Tour and Transport Operators
13. Adventure Tourism
14. The Richard Power Award for Destination Marketing
15. Tourism Restaurants and Catering Services
16. Tourism Wineries, Distilleries and Breweries
17. Caravan and Holiday Parks
18. Hosted Accommodation
19. Unique Accommodation
20. Self Contained Accommodation (new category for 2016)
21. Standard Accommodation
22. Deluxe Accommodation
23. Luxury Accommodation
24. New Tourism Business
25. Excellence in Food Tourism
26. Qantas Award for Excellence in Sustainable Tourism
27. Backpacker Accommodation
28. Outstanding Contribution by a Volunteer or a Volunteer Group
29. Young Achievers Award
30. The Marie Watson-Blake Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual
RULES FOR ENTRY:

Please ensure that you download and read the Rules for Entry before completing your submission. There are changes to the rules each year, so it is important that you review this document even if you are a repeat entrant.

TILMA TIP: IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOU READ THE RULES BEFORE YOU START AND AGAIN BEFORE YOU SUBMIT, MAKING SURE YOU ARE NOT LOSING ANY POINTS FOR SILLY MISTAKES! SOMETIMES THERE IS ONLY 1-2 POINTS BETWEEN THE GOLD AND SILVER WINNERS.

1. You are encouraged to enter the category that best reflects your core business. If you are entering more than one category, a separate and complete nomination and submission must be submitted electronically for each category.
   Entrants may only enter one submission in any one of the following group of categories:
   Attractions – either category 1 or 2;
   Festivals and Events – either category 3 or 4;
   Tour and/or Transport Operators – either category 11 or 12;
   Accommodation – either category 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 or 27

2. Achievements or activities referred to within your entry must relate to the qualifying period 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016
   Entrants must have traded for the entire qualifying period. Exceptions apply to seasonal facilities and the following categories:
   3 – Major Festivals and Events
   4 – Festivals and Events
   14 – Destination Marketing
   24 – New Tourism Business
   where the activity being put forward for consideration must have occurred within the qualifying period.

3. Each category has specific entry requirements, which are articulated within the category descriptor. Eligibility must be clearly demonstrated as part of your response to Question 1a. Failure to demonstrate your eligibility may result in your submission being penalised.

4. Unanswered questions will attract zero points. If you feel that you cannot answer a question please discuss this with the Tourism Awards Coordinator. If you still feel the question is not relevant please explain your reasons within your submission.

5. Entrants must be based or operate in Queensland.
   An exception to this rule exists where there is a genuine community of interest allowing an entrant to choose to nominate in another state/territory’s Awards program. To qualify for this exception the entrant must be able to demonstrate proof of membership within a relevant association or provide a letter from that state/territories tourism office confirming the entrant’s participation in marketing campaigns or activities.
   Should a company have individual operational branches or properties in other states/territories they may enter the individual state/territory awards as long as the majority of the submission focuses on the activities undertaken in that state/territory.

6. An entrant, such as a chain or franchise that has multiple products, must enter each product individually if they want each business to be able to promote the achievement of winning a tourism award. Alternatively the business may enter but the logo may only be used by the corporate entity, not the individual products.

7. An entry cannot be moved into another category following the closing date for lodgement of submissions.
8. If at any time following submission of an entry the business being put forward goes into administration, voluntary receivership, liquidation or bankruptcy, the entrant is required to advise the Tourism Awards Coordinator and accepts that the submission will no longer be eligible for an award.

9. Entrants who win the same category three consecutive years in a row at the Queensland Tourism Awards will receive an award and entry into the Hall of Fame.
Entrants will be eligible to enter that category again after an absence period of two years i.e. Win the same category three years in a row e.g. 2012, 2013, 2014
Receive an award and entry into the Hall of Fame 2014
Required to not enter that same category for two years 2015, 2016
Eligible to re-enter that same category the following year 2017

10. There is no direct entry into the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards except Outstanding Contribution by an Individual (National). Only state or territory tourism award winners in categories 1 through 26 will automatically become a finalist in the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards.

COMPLIANCE WITH COMPETITION RULES
To ensure consistency and fairness in judging, the Rules for Entry must be strictly met.
Failure to adhere to the five formatting rules below will incur a deduction of one point per rule stated, except for rule number 5 where 1 point will be deducted per additional page over 31.
Note: In some categories the competition is very close and the deduction of any points could be the difference between winning and losing.

FORMATTING GUIDELINES

1. COVER PAGE
The cover page must be included and clearly marked with:
• The name of the business being entered;
• The category entered;
• The state/territory tourism awards entered including the year; (e.g. 2015 QLD Tourism Awards)
• An image of the product entered.

2. FONT
All font must be 12 point Times New Roman, Calibri, Tahoma or Arial with the exception of:
• Image captions
• Testimonial quotes - which must be a minimum of 8 points.
No variation, such as narrow or condensed font styles, is acceptable. There is no margin requirement.

3. TEXT
All text must be 1½ line spacing (Microsoft Word) with the exception of:
• Text contained within a table
• Question text
• Image captions
• Testimonials
which can be single lined spaced.

4. FORMAT
Newspaper column format will not be accepted. Text must be presented in portrait with the exception of:
• Tables
• Graphs
which will be accepted in landscape.

5. PAGES
All pages are required to be numbered. The final submission must have no more than 31 pages including cover page and all text graphs and images. Contents Pages are not accepted.

HYPERLINKS – Hyperlinks are not to be included within your submission

SIZE OF PDF – Your submission must be no more than 20MB when you upload.

Source: Queensland Tourism Industry Council website
IMPORTANT CHANGES

Following a complete review of the Tourism Awards program at a national level, substantial changes have been made to categories and criteria, which will be implemented through the 2015 Queensland Tourism Awards. It is important that entrants (particularly those that have entered previously), take note of all changes/updates.

IMPORTANT! Do not refer to criteria specifications and eligibility descriptors from the 2014 (or earlier) Queensland Tourism Awards as they no longer apply.

Key changes to categories and criteria
2015 Queensland Tourism Awards

Following a complete review of the Tourism Awards program at a national level, substantial changes have been made to categories and criteria, which will be implemented through the 2015 Queensland Tourism Awards. It is important that entrants (particularly those that have entered previously), take note of all changes/updates. Do not refer to criteria specifications and eligibility descriptors from the 2014 (or earlier) Queensland Tourism Awards as they no longer apply.

Category names
A number of category names have changed. Refer to the table below for a comparison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014 Categories (Former)</th>
<th>2015 Categories (Current)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heritage &amp; Cultural Tourism</td>
<td>Cultural Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Tourism</td>
<td>Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Information &amp; Services</td>
<td>Visitor Information Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Tourism</td>
<td>Business Event Venues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Tour and/or Transport Operators</td>
<td>Major Tour &amp; Transport Operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour and/or Transport Operators</td>
<td>Tour &amp; Transport Operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist &amp; Caravan Parks</td>
<td>Caravan &amp; Holiday Parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Tourism Development</td>
<td>New Tourism Business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New category – Self Contained Accommodation
This category recognises accommodation providers that offer quality self-contained accommodation including cabins, lodges and houses, excluding serviced apartments and resorts.

Category descriptors/eligibility for categories
A number of category descriptors have now changed. It is important that entrants read the descriptor (located at the top of the category criteria) before selecting a category, to ensure eligibility.
New Tourism Business - now only open to new businesses
This category recognises new tourism businesses that have commenced operations during the qualifying period. This award recognises excellence in the planning and development of new tourism infrastructure and/or services. (Tourism businesses that have commenced a new product or opened new infrastructure need to enter another category most applicable to the business)

Questions/criteria
Many questions have changed across all categories. Please ensure you refer to the 2015 criteria when completing your written submission.

IMPORTANT: Do not refer to criteria specifications and eligibility descriptors from the 2014 (or earlier) Queensland Tourism Awards as they no longer apply.

If you refer to last year’s criteria in your submission, you will lose points when your entry is assessed by the judges.

The 2015 category criteria can be accessed on the QTA website.

Heading changes for question areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014 Question Area (Former)</th>
<th>2015 Question Area (Current)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1 Product</td>
<td>Tourism Excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2 Business Plans</td>
<td>Business Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3 Marketing</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4 Customer Service and Professional Development</td>
<td>Customer Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 5 Responsible Tourism</td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Queensland Tourism Industry Council website

THIS IS A BIGGIE!!!!

From 2016, all Queensland and National Tourism Awards entrants are required to be certified or accredited in order to be eligible for entry into the Awards program. This accreditation or certification will be in addition to the legal requirements necessary for operation of your business (e.g. registrations for vehicles and equipment, licence requirements for employees).

IMPORTANT NOTE: You do not need to be accredited at the time of nominating for the Queensland Tourism Awards, however you must have completed a program and be accredited/certified by the time your written submission is due in August 2016.

QTIC will be preparing ‘Your guide to Accreditation and Certification Programs recognised by the Queensland Tourism Awards’ to help businesses understand what accreditation programs are applicable. Keep an eye on their website and social channels for updates.

For further information or support please refer to our Information Pack or contact the Business Support team at QTIC on (07) 3236 1445 or businesssupport@qtic.com.au.
PREPARATION IS VITAL

ALLOCATE STAFF TO THE JOB – INVOLVE AS MANY PEOPLE AS YOU CAN (HAVE A BRAINSTORMING SESSION).

SET A TIMELINE.

ALLOW 10 DAYS TO PROOF AND HAVE AS MANY OTHER PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE PROOF.

READ THE RULES OF ENTRY A FEW TIMES PRIOR TO COMMENCING AND THEN READ THEM AGAIN BEFORE SUBMITTING.

Following are a series of tips and practical advice, which will assist applicants to put together an award winning submission… Starting now!

- Become accredited!
- Make yourself familiar with the submission questions, the program rules, terms and conditions
- Review and update your Business Plan, Marketing Plan, Customer Service Policy and any other relevant documentation that will help Contractors compile your submission. Remember to add in any goals, strategies and outcomes achieved in the qualifying period and to involve your colleagues in this process
- Keep a track of your involvement in the (local, regional, state and national) tourism industry e.g. collaborative marketing, working groups, tourism awards, packaging, events etc
- Make a note of any innovations that have taken place in the qualifying period, which demonstrate your Branches commitment to improving your tourism product/service
- Keep a record of staff training/development and how this has improved the service provided to visitors
- Review the innovative marketing strategies you’ve implemented during the qualifying period and record the success of these tactics (important!). In doing this, compile a folder of sample collateral, media releases, blogs, engaging social media posts, newsletters, media clippings, PR etc
- Set up (or update the) systems you use to record data e.g. visitor numbers, bookings etc If you can generate (or compose) a report which reveals trends and tallies relevant to the qualifying period, that would be great!
- Record and monitor visitor satisfaction by tracking the feedback you have received from your visitors. This includes compiling quotes, testimonials and letters of thanks to include in your submission and, reviewing feedback received via Trip Advisor, social media, visitor books, other. In doing this, identify any areas which require particular attention
- Develop a list of ways in which your operation has contributed to the local economy during the qualifying period e.g. employment, purchase of goods and services, events etc
- Consider how the requirements of your Ecotourism Australia certification can help you in compiling your submission. You may be asked about your power or water consumption, the energy saving measures you have in place etc
- Collate 20 high resolution ‘hero-shots’ for use within the submission (or as attachments)
- Ensure your electronic files are clearly labelled, easily accessible and that you have access to a secure file transfer system, which you can share with external contractors
- Participate in any workshops or webinars offered by QTIC. In these sessions, you will learn about the importance of layout, answering the question in full
GENERAL TIPS AND HINTS

Always refer to the points allocated to each part of the questions and ensure you spend the relevant amount of time on each accordingly. Remember, there is often only 1-2 points between gold and silver.

Use images throughout, but ensure they are relevant to the question they are positioned with and include a caption that tells the story.

Images and testimonials throughout your submission will help break it up and add substance to your response - just make sure it is relevant.

Judges love tables! They make it easier for the judge to read and interpret. Sub headings and dot points are also good!

Note: The following questions are based on the Major Tourism Attractions category as a guide, but are relevant to many of the categories.

QUESTION 1. TOURISM EXCELLENCE

a) Demonstrate your eligibility for this category as related to the descriptor above and provide a brief overview on the nature and history of the business. (This question is worth 6 points)

Take care to ensure you have entered the right category and that your response aligns to the category descriptor. Failure to demonstrate your eligibility will be reflected in your score.

Refer to the ABOUT US section of your website as this may assist with this response.

Judges will want to know how and when the business started, who works in the business, where it is located and how it has developed over the years.

A map will be helpful here.

Consider providing some insight into your submission as well, use it as a selling piece for the reader. Enticing language to an enticing place.

If relevant, acknowledge the traditional owners of the land

Use a creative writing style here and grab the judges attention - remember, they have to read 30 pages of approximately 30 submissions so make it enjoyable for them!

Use an image that really showcases your core experience in this response

b) What tourism products, experiences and services do you offer visitors? (This question is worth 6 points)

The focus of this question is tourism and only tourism

This is a follow on from part a and allows you the opportunity to provide more specific insights about the business

Once again, you may be able to refer to your website for inspiration here.

I suggest you use a table for this response

Be sure to include images in this area

Break up the response under sub headings - Products, Services, Experiences

You may also wish to divide up each of the above sub areas under business divisions e.g. restaurant, accommodation, tours
c) Describe your commitment to tourism excellence. (This question is worth 4 points)

- Explain your values, philosophy and commitment to excellence
- Consider what makes you stand out for other operators/competitors.
- Have you entered into any awards or had any other successes to highlight your commitment?
- Consider results on Trip Advisor and other ratings based platforms - this is useful to back up your claims around excellence
- This is also where accreditations should be mentioned as they highlight your commitment to excellence

d) Describe your involvement in the tourism industry. (This question is worth 4 points)

- Explain how you have been actively involved with and contributed to the tourism industry locally, regionally and nationally.
- This response works well as a 2-column table and sub headings for local, regional and national
- Consider memberships, participation in cooperative marketing, sitting on committees or boards, representing the region at consumer/trade events, hosting famils, etc
- In addition to stating what you have done, you should aim to also measure some of this success from the involvement.
- A quote from a respected industry stakeholder to back up this response would work well here

**QUESTION 2. BUSINESS PLANNING**

**DIG UP YOUR BUSINESS PLAN AND HAVE IT HANDY WHEN ANSWERING THIS QUESTION. IT MAY EVEN BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW AND UPDATE YOUR BUSINESS PLAN AS PART OF THE PROCESS – THIS IS NEVER A WASTE OF TIME! WITHOUT THIS YOU WILL STRUGGLE THROUGH THIS SECTION.**

a) Provide an overview of the key features of your business plan including goals, strategies and outcomes. (This question is worth 6 points)

- Introduce this section with your mission and/or vision statement.
- A 3-column table would be useful here to display the information - goals, strategies, outcomes
- Make sure you use measurable goals and outcomes e.g. Increase school group and education bookings by 20% from June 30 to July 1.
- Although not essential an outline of your financials would add value to this response, particularly to back up success
- Try to factor in a mixture of your business goals and even use sub headings in your matrix - financial, operational, human resources, product development, marketing, general.

b) Describe any innovations that have taken place during the qualifying period to improve your tourism business and demonstrate how these innovations enhance your tourism experiences/services. (This question is worth 6 points)

- This is a 2-part question - make sure you answer both parts by breaking it down.
- An innovation can be defined as “The process of introducing new or significantly improved goods or services and/or implementing new or significantly improved processes.” (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics).
- Be sure to include the impact the innovation had on your business!
- A 3-column matrix will work best for this response - Innovation, impact on business, how it’s enhanced experience/service
- Consider things like upgrades, implementation of any partnerships and HR changes that your business has benefited from.
c) What investment has been made in staff training and development and how has this improved the services provided to your visitors? (This question is worth 4 points)

☐ Describe your commitment to training as the introduction

☐ A 3-column matrix will help you break down all of the training under sub headings - training & development, details, how it has improved guest services

☐ How do you ensure you and/or your staff gain the correct knowledge and skills to carry out their job?

☐ Investment does not need to be financial - consider breaking it down under sub headings (Recruitment & Induction, On the job, Formal training, Informal training)

☐ Especially from a compliance perspective what training has been undertaken e.g: first aid.

☐ Identify $ value of training as % of marketing budget gives a good understanding on the value of training.

d) Describe the main risks for your tourism business and the risk mitigation measures you have implemented. (This question is worth 4 points)

☐ Consider all aspects of business risk not just workplace health and safety.

☐ Create a 4-column table - Risk, mitigation strategy, likelihood, risk level.

☐ Break up risks under sub headings - marketing risks, operating risks, financial risks, WH&S.

☐ If you can use a case study to showcase how your risk management strategies have been put into practice you will boost your response.

QUESTION 3. MARKETING

GRAB YOUR MARKETING PLAN (OR CREATE ONE) BEFORE STARTING THIS SECTION. THINK ABOUT ALL THE THINGS YOU HAVE DONE IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS AND WHAT YOU PLAN TO DO IN THE COMING MONTHS - INVOLVE YOUR TEAM!

a) Who are your target markets? (This question is worth 4 points)

☐ This question seeks to understand who you have aimed your marketing towards.

☐ Consider for example; who they are, where they are from, how old they are, how they purchase travel, what motivates and inspires them and how your product meets their expectations. You need to show that you know everything about your audience!

☐ You can boost this response by including pie charts to show a breakdown of what each of the markets contribute to your overall business.

b) How do you know your product/service meets the needs of your target markets? (This question is worth 4 points)

☐ What research have you conducted or used to determine your target markets? How do you know the target markets you identified in Q 3 a) are right for you?

☐ Show evidence to support you are meeting your target market needs e.g. visitor feedback, Trip Advisor reviews.

☐ Always ensure that you only refer to the markets identified in part a - never introduce a new audience part way through.
c) What are your unique selling points and demonstrate how you communicate these to your target markets? (This question is worth 6 points)

- What makes you different from your competitors? Consider for example; size, location, exclusivity, services, facilities.
- What methods do you use to communicate these to the target markets you have mentioned in Q 3a)?
- A competitor analysis would be beneficial in this response as it shows that you understand who your main competitors are and how you are different.
- Following the competitor analysis outline your USP’s in a 3-column table format - target markets, USP’s, how USP’s are communicated.

d) Describe the innovative marketing strategies you have implemented to encourage new and/or repeat business and demonstrate the success of these initiatives. (This question is worth 6 points)

- What have you done differently to attract your customers? Consider for example; social media, digital advertising, apps, trade, PR, etc
- The response needs to focus on innovative approaches to marketing.
- Remember to also answer the second part of the question and expand on how these new activities have been successful.
- Always provide evidence in support of your success - e.g.: external website bookings figures
- A 4-column table format is recommended for this response - media, strategy, target markets, outcomes.

**QUESTION 4. CUSTOMER SERVICE**

**INVOLVE YOUR FRONT OF HOUSE STAFF IN THIS SECTION!**

a) Describe your customer service philosophy/values. (This question is worth 5 points)

- Start this response by noting what your customer service policy is and outlining the company culture that drives quality customer service
- Consider the systems and procedures you have in place to deliver outstanding service.
- How do you make an effort to understand visitor needs, welcome them, respect them, thank them and do business with them? Include a case study if that helps get your message across!
- Aim to back up this response with a testimonial from a guest or staff member

b) Explain how you provide for visitors with specific needs. (This question is worth 5 points)

- Demonstrate how you consider visitors’ special and specific needs, remembering that this is more than ‘special needs’ or disabled facilities.
- Think about who your customers are and their specific requirements, being sure to link it to the target markets mentioned in 3a.
- Set this response up as a 2-column table - specific needs, services offered
- Take into consideration non English speaking guests, children/families, backpackers, coach groups, elderly people, corporates - they all have specific needs that you need to consider.
- An opportunity here to discuss a case study based on special needs. Select one that really highlights how you go out of your way to satisfy all specific needs.
c) Describe how you measure customer satisfaction and identify areas for improvement. (This question is worth 5 points)

- What processes do you have in place to understand how your customer feels about your product/service? For example; feedback forms, monitoring social media, blogs, mystery shoppers etc.
- Consider providing a case study/example where you have implemented a change based on customer feedback.
- Include detail around how you identify areas for improvement, what processes are in place to monitor feedback. How often, who monitors, is feedback then provided to staff etc.

d) What processes do you have in place to respond to customer complaints? (This question is worth 5 points)

- Consider how you receive feedback, for example, telephone, email or User Generated Content such as blogs and TripAdvisor. Explain how you respond to each of these different communication channels.
- Include a case study on how you have successfully managed a complaint and turned it into a positive

**QUESTION 5. SUSTAINABILITY**

**IF YOU CAN ANSWER THIS QUESTION REALLY WELL YOU WILL BE IN THE FRONT RUNNING! TRY STARTING WITH THIS QUESTION AND REDUCE THE RISK OF RUNNING OUT OF STEAM FOR WHAT IS A VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION.**

a) Demonstrate how your business contributes to the local economy. (This question is worth 6 points)

- Explain how your business financially contributes to the local economy in your region, for example; local purchasing, employing local people, using local trades people and agencies, etc.
- Consider also your partnerships and collaborations e.g.: sale of local tours
- If you can put a dollar value on how much you have spent on local supplies and wages etc in a 12 month period it will boost your submission

b) Demonstrate how your business engages with and brings benefits to the local community. (This question is worth 7 points)

- Consider the social benefits you provide to your local community, for example, supporting local businesses, product packaging, charitable donations, sponsorship, engagement with community groups, working with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Consider what’s important to your community and show judges that you understand the priorities of your community and involve yourself in these things.
- Consider how this results in benefit your business?

c) Describe how your business cares for the local environment. (This question is worth 7 points)

- Explain your commitment to environmental sustainability and detail the activities you conduct in relation to conserving and measuring water, waste management and energy
- You may wish to break this up under sub headings - Water Conservation, Waste management, Energy efficiency
- Mention any relevant accreditations
- Always start by outlining the big ticket items and then the minor ones
SITE INSPECTION TIPS AND HINTS

The purpose of the site visit is to assess the business being nominated and for verification of claims that may be made within the submission. Operations are under no obligation to offer a free experience of their product. The site visit will be prearranged at a mutually convenient time and the judges have a proforma from which they work.

The site inspection is worth 20% of the total score being added to the submission score. The exceptions to this are:

- Categories 3 and 4 – Entrants in these categories will be asked to provide relevant documents via email. The allocated judge will call the entrant direct to discuss requirements and where applicable will visit their workplace. There will be no points awarded.
- Categories 8 and 24 – These categories will be visited and evaluated but due to the potential diversity of entrants will not be awarded any points.
- Category 14 – This category does not undergo a site visit.

Site visit judges will ask to see the following:

- Customer Service Policies
- OH&S policies and Risk Management Policies
- Human Resources Policies
- Sustainability Policies
- Marketing Plans
- Business Plans

The absence of these documents will be reflected in the score. It is worth setting up a folder with all documents so that you are prepared and can run through them with the judge when they arrive.

If you are a festival/event it is hard to really showcase your event to a site judge - why not create a slideshow of images and videos on an iPad and give the judge a visual presentation of the experience.

Judges insight - most judges will review your website, social channels and Trip Advisor listing prior to visiting. Whilst this is not formally judged it can have an impact on first impressions.

Be sure to provide judges with detailed directions/maps, keeping in mind that many of them will be unfamiliar with your region.

Do not go overboard with the VIP treatment. You should treat them as you would a media rep or other familiarisation guest - the aim is to give them a very good insight to your business.

Remember that the site judge is different to the submission judge and generally the site visit happens prior to the submission judging, so the site judge will more than likely not have seen your written submission. Do not assume that they know anything!

A suggested structure for the site visit is to start by introducing the judge to relevant team members and offering them a drink as you sit down to go over the formalities. Then end it with a tour/site famil and ensure they leave with a wow moment.

Note: Scores from the site visit do not apply at the Australian Tourism Awards.
MAXIMISING THE BENEFITS!

Entering the Tourism Awards is a great way for you to discover the full potential of your business, super charge your business planning and gain a competitive edge through feedback from industry leaders.

YOUR AWARD IS AN AMAZING ACHIEVEMENT AND ONE YOU SHOULD CELEBRATE AND INCORPORATE AS PART OF YOUR MARKETING AND ONGOING BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT.

In order to leverage regional, state and national awards success to the greatest extent, you could:

• **ENGAGE YOUR PR REP/TEAM** in a brainstorming session and schedule all possible PR opportunities for the calendar year. This would include local press around regional award finalists, the announcement of National Award winners or Hall of Fame nominations, pitches to niche travel publications, cross promotion with industry partners, other

• **PROFILE YOUR WINS** on social platforms, website, direct mail, social media, other

• Consider **DEVELOPING A SERIES OF PACKAGES, ITINERARIES AND BUNDLING PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**, which incentivise consumers to experience you have to offer

• Arrange **IN-STORE PROMOTIONS AND ONSITE SIGNAGE**

• **INCLUDE THE ‘FINALIST’ AND ‘WINNER’ AWARDS LOGO’S** in any new print/digital collateral, publications, advertising, email signatures etc

• **CELEBRATE MILESTONES AND ACHIEVEMENTS** on a local, regional and state level amongst staff. This could be done by way of special events, direct mail, internal awards programs, incentives, etc

• **liaise with the awards coordinators** to make sure you are capitalising on and prepared for all upcoming promotional opportunities e.g. Awards sponsorship, digital marketing/PR, advertising, speaking, photo/video and media opportunities etc

• **ENSURE YOU ARE REPRESENTED** at the regional, state and national awards

The information below has been prepared by QTIC and provides you with a set of guidelines on ideas and tips for making the most of your status as a ‘Queensland Tourism Award winner’.

**STEP 1. BE PREPARED IN CASE YOU WIN**

• We all know a picture tells a thousand words and in the case of the QTA, good photos could help drive bookings and sales and even boost your bottom line. You will be asked to provide images (photos) during your submission process which will be used for media publicity in the lead up to the Gala Ceremony and following the awards announcement. The quality and resolution of these photos is extremely important as these images will be used to portray your business/services/products on social media and within traditional print media such as newspapers. (Images must be high resolution 300ppi)

• Think about your key messages and statements you might make during interviews with media. If you’ve never participated in a media interview before, carry out some research on being a media spokesperson. You may wish to speak with your LTO/RTO to seek advice on handling the media or consider engaging the services of a public relations consultant. It’s critical that you maximise your space in the newspaper, on television or the radio because this is your (free) opportunity to tell readers and listeners why they (and others) should choose your business.

• Think about the brief points you want to make in your acceptance speech – however keep it short as you get less than 1 minute on stage when receiving your trophy.
STEP 2. ATTEND THE GALA CEREMONY

- Put a date claimer in your diary for the QTA Gala Ceremony (held at the end of November each year) and secure your tickets once they’re available for purchase. The black-tie Gala Ceremony is attended by almost 1,000 industry representatives which affords guests the opportunity to network and meet like-minded tourism operators and industry representatives. Some guests have reported that this networking opportunity is just as important as winning – they say use it to your advantage to help your own business. Learn as much as you can from other operators.

STEP 3. WHEN YOU WIN, SHARE YOUR GOOD NEWS WITH THE WORLD!

- QTIC (Queensland Tourism Industry Council), as host of the QTA, will distribute a media release to local and state media to publicise your award win. We will work with you to organise media interviews and photo opportunities if required. It is important to be available for media interviews and photos, as well as promptly returning messages to journalists.

- Announce your success on social media - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Share your excitement on the Queensland Tourism Awards Facebook page and if you took photos on the night of you and your team celebrating, make sure to include these images as well and posting with the relevant QTA hashtag (e.g. #QTA15 #QueenslandTourismAwards).

- Email your customers, existing clients and suppliers with the good news. Thank your staff, suppliers and supporters – without them, you wouldn’t be here!

- Make sure to announce it on your website – include a short paragraph about how and why you received the award (and include a photo). You may use the comments from the QTIC media release (quotes by Chief Executive Daniel Gschwind) which will be available on the QTIC website after the gala ceremony.

- Chat to your local visitor information centre to make sure they know of your success. Ask them if you can put up a display in the centre, or invite their staff to your business.

- Make sure your LTO, RTO or STO know about your result. They will have consumer and industry communication channels and it’s worth asking if they’ll include something about your success (if they’re not already telling everyone!).

- Contact the sponsor of your Award category to say thank you. If you wish, get in touch with the other winners in your category to send a letter or email of congratulations.

- Host a post-awards staff celebration to recognise the efforts of your team. Share with your staff your aspirations for entering (and winning!) the awards again next year.

STEP 4. USE THE QTA LOGO

- Each category winner receives a logo to assist in promoting your award on all marketing collateral (e.g. email signature blocks, letterhead, brochures, advertisements, website and social media channels). You’ll find the logo use guidelines at the end of this document.

- QTIC members should be using the QTA logo to accompany their ‘QTIC Member’ logo, available for members to download on the QTIC website.

STEP 5. DISPLAY YOUR CERTIFICATE AND/OR TROPHY

- Award recipients will receive a certificate and gold winners will receive a trophy. Make sure this is displayed in a prominent place for everyone to see. If you don’t have a front of house, then make sure the certificate or trophy is on show to your staff – it’s a great motivator!

- Take a photo of your team with the award and include it in your social media and eNewsletters.
STEP 6. START PLANNING FOR NEXT YEAR’S QUEENSLAND TOURISM AWARDS

- Feedback from the judges will be made available to you. Take this feedback on board, not just in terms of entering the Awards again, but as part of continuous business development.
- Put a note in your diary to start planning for next year’s award submission. You may also wish to include the entry fee in your financial budget.
- Investigate what other industry award programs you could enter, such as the QTIC Prize for Innovation and Tourism. Entering as many award programs as possible will help build your business profile and position you as an award-winning operator.

WHAT IF YOU DON’T RECEIVE A QUEENSLAND TOURISM AWARD?

In the event that your business does not receive a Queensland Tourism Award, we wish to emphasise the importance of not feeling discouraged. Rather than seeing this type of situation as a negative outcome, use the opportunity to learn from the judge’s feedback and apply it to your submission for next year. Other suggestions include:

- Hold a staff event to recognise the hard work by employees in contributing to the Awards entry by your business; despite not winning an Award, staff efforts should still be recognised and you should demonstrate your enthusiasm for entering (and winning!) again next year.
- Network and connect with other tourism operators who entered the Awards to seek guidance on how to improve your chances for next year!
- Consider visiting operators and businesses that won your category; use this opportunity to see for yourself how they operate and to learn more about their award-winning business.
- Make the most of the support tools provided by QTIC to help Queensland Tourism Awards entrants improve for the future. One-on-one mentoring and pre-entry submission reviews are just two of the support tools offered to entrants throughout the year.
- Need some extra motivation? Picture yourself on stage holding that Queensland Tourism Awards trophy the following year and going on to compete in the Australian Tourism Awards. Envisage yourself telling people you are the proud operator of Australia’s best ______ tourism business. Feels great to imagine, doesn’t it? We can assure you the victory will be even sweeter in reality.
NEED SOME HELP?

TILMA SUCCESSES:

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Gold: Arakwal Dolphin Dreaming - Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Tourism (NSW Tourism Awards 2015), Silver: (Australian Tourism Awards 2015)

Cape Tribulation Beach House Resort Gold: Standard Accommodation (QLD Tourism Awards 2015)

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Silver: Sea Acres Rainforest Centre - Specialised Tourism Services (NSW Tourism Awards 2015)

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Bronze: Wild About Whales - Destination Marketing (NSW Tourism Awards 2015)

Food I Am Silver: Food Tourism (Inland NSW Tourism Awards 2015)

Food I Am Winner: Food Tourism (Inland NSW Tourism Awards 2014)

Junee Rhythm ‘n’ Rail Festival Winner: Community Festivals & Events (Inland NSW Tourism Awards 2014)

Elm Cottage Winner: Unique Accommodation (Canberra & Capital Region Tourism Awards 2013)


Deni Ute Muster Winner: Festivals & Events (Australian Tourism Awards 2012), Winner: (NSW Tourism Awards 2012)

Junee Shire Council Tourism Bronze: Local Government Tourism (NSW Tourism Awards 2012), Silver: (Inland NSW Tourism Awards 2012)

Riverina Regional Tourism Winner: Marketing (Inland NSW Tourism Awards 2012)

Trelawney Farm Winner: Deluxe Accommodation (Inland NSW Tourism Awards 2012), Finalist: (NSW Tourism Awards 2012)

Deniliquin Visitor Information Centre Winner: Visitor Information Services (Inland NSW Tourism Awards 2012), Finalist: (NSW Tourism Awards 2012)

Tilma Management Finalist: (Small Business Champions Awards 2012)

Boggy Creek Shows Winner: Heritage & Tourism (Canberra & Capital Tourism Awards 2011), Finalist: (Australian Tourism Awards 2011)

AWARDS BRING RECOGNITION, CREDIBILITY, PUBLICITY, AND UNLIMITED OPPORTUNITIES! TILMA GROUP HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH MANY SUCCESSFUL AWARD SUBMISSIONS, PROVIDING MENTORING, FEEDBACK, INSIGHT, MOCK JUDGING, AND FULL SUBMISSION WRITING SERVICES.

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