

7. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Experiences

This category recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism experiences that demonstrate authenticity and cultivate a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history, and traditions.

Word Count: 6,000 min – 10,000 max words

Written Submission: 90 Points

Online Review: 10 Points

Site Visit: 20 Points

Total Points: 120

Business Impact Summary (0 marks)

Please provide the judges with an understanding of any impact to the business's situation resulting from natural, national and/or world events during the qualifying period. E.g., natural disasters (fire/flood), pandemic.

NOTE: This response does not contribute to the overall score but provide a clearer picture for judges to understand what the business has been able to achieve. This is factual information only, allowing you to tell the business story in the subsequent questions.

NOTE: If no impact to the business has occurred in the qualifying period, this question does not need to be answered.

Bullet points are recommended. The response should be short and sharp. (Max 250 words overall)

List any issues that have had a significant impact on the business during the qualifying period (1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024).

Include the following information:

- *What the event/situation was (fire, flood, business restrictions etc.).*
- *How it impacted the business (e.g., closure of business, staff shortages, stock levels, cash flow etc.).*
- *The severity of the impact.*
- *For what period (e.g., how many months within the qualifying period).*

1. Introduction (15 marks)

A. Provide an overview of the tourism products, experiences, and/or services including the nature and history of the business. 7 marks

Take the judge on a journey of the business products and/or service; how and when it began, where the business is located or where the services are provided, who works in the business etc.

How has the business developed over time? For example, what new additions to the infrastructure were made (and when), how have staffing levels grown, what significant improvements have been made to the product/service?

What are the products, experiences and/or services on offer to visitors? Provide sufficient detail to ensure the judge can obtain a good understanding of what is on offer.

Highlight the businesses points of difference and what makes it stand out from others (its unique selling points). Consider the amenities, products, services, or facilities that enhance visitor satisfaction.

This is where the judges (and auditors) will gain an understanding of how the business fits into the category; therefore, it is important to clearly demonstrate your eligibility by aligning with the category criteria to ensure that there is no misunderstanding as to why you have entered this category.

The judges may not be familiar with the business – your submission may be judged nationally and could have judges that are not from your state/territory. Therefore, explain everything from the ground up.

B. Outline the key features of your business plan. 4 marks

Provide an overview of the key features of your business plan. This should include the overall vision of the business and its main goals, strategies.

Provide insight as to the rationale for these goals/strategies.

This will assist the judge to understand how business development (Q3) and marketing efforts (Q4) align with the business's overall strategies.

C. How does the business demonstrate tourism excellence? 4 marks

Demonstrate the businesses commitment to tourism excellence by explaining the values and philosophy of the business. How does the business go beyond standard measures to provide an exceptional visitor experience.

This should be reflected in the businesses policies and procedures, on how staff is inducted, incentivised and/or trained – so include details of these to show the business commitment to excellence.

How has the business been actively involved with the tourism industry (locally, regionally, and nationally) through both business and personal participation?

Tourism excellence can also be demonstrated by listing any awards won and accreditations held.

IMAGES

Attach a minimum of two graphics throughout Question 1. (accurately named) to support and enhance the 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.

2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage and Culture (30 marks)

A. How does the business provide an authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience? 10 marks

Describe how the business has developed its product/experience to ensure that it provides an authentic representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

Include how the business has worked with various stakeholder groups such as governments, communities, and other industries to exchange information.

Demonstrate how the business respects the rights and values of host and local communities, property owners and Aboriginal peoples.

B. Demonstrate how the business educates visitors and communities about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and the need to preserve and enjoy it respectfully. 10 marks

The judges are looking for leadership in education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Therefore, you need to outline how you share knowledge and awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. Consider for example, education programs, communication systems and activity programs delivered throughout the visitor experience (pre/during/post).

Consider all the ways in which awareness and education are delivered to visitors and communities about the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, including traditional beliefs and customs. For example, onsite communications/signage, staff training and development, education programs.

Demonstrate what the outcomes of these activities were and how you have influenced visitors through activities which foster responsible use and enjoyment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

C. Demonstrate how the business generates/stimulates tourism, employment, economic activity and community benefits in the host Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. 10 marks

The judges are looking to understand the positive impact the business has made to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Demonstrate the direct benefit to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in which your business represents/engages/interacts with. Consider the employment opportunities, economic stimulus, awareness generated, etc. Your response should consider how the business optimizes long-term benefits to the community.

When demonstrating how the business supports the local economy it is recommended that this be presented as a percentage of total contribution. E.g., '75% of all our supplies are sourced from the host Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.'

To demonstrate employment opportunities, consider activities such as mentoring, education, training, and career development opportunities that the business makes available to the host Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

IMAGES

Attach a minimum of two graphics throughout Question 2. to support and enhance your response.

3. Business Development (15 marks)

A. During the qualifying period, what innovations/enhancements has the business implemented to improve the product/experience/service and how was Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture integrated into these developments? 10 marks

This question seeks to understand how the business has improved the product/experience/service within the qualifying period, what the rationale was for the changes and how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture was included within the development.

To respond, consider any innovations and/or enhancements that were implemented to develop the visitor experience/service over this period. If many, include the most significant ones.

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).

An enhancement could include, for example, a new experience or facility, updating point of sale processes to changing to ethically sourced supplies.

If the business has been significantly impacted by natural or world events within the qualifying period, describe what the business implemented to support its recovery/resilience. Outline the strategies implemented for business endurance through the challenging events.

Actions that supported the ongoing survival of your business could include, for example, diversifying your product/experience, seeking alternative ways for the delivery of the experience/product/service.

Explain the decision-making process that drove the business to implement the innovations/enhancement. Consider how these enhance the visitor experience and/or supported business endurance.

The judges will be looking for an understanding of what prompted the innovations/enhancement e.g., was it a result of guest feedback, change in market demand, etc., or how it was anticipated to support business endurance in the current climate.

Your response should include the research and planning undertaken by the business to reach the decisions taken. For example: external research that was considered, past customers surveyed, etc.

Include how the innovations/enhancement align with the business’s main goals and strategies that were outlined in Q1.B. Ensure the goals are specific so you can link it to the outcomes in the next question.

Ensure you include how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture was considered in the development and implementation of these innovations/enhancements.

B. What were the outcome/s of the innovation/enhancement? 5 marks

Outline what measures you have in place to track the success of these innovations/enhancements.

Judges are looking for qualitative and quantifiable data that demonstrates what the expected outcomes of the innovations/enhancements were, and whether these were achieved. If able to, provide previous years data to assist to demonstrate improvements.

The response is looking for more than the innovation/enhancement being successfully created e.g., 'new infrastructure was successfully built', rather, it is looking for insight as to how it supported the business to reach its goals/strategies e.g., visitation increased by an average of 10 visitors per day, visitor satisfaction improved by 13%, engagement with the website increased from an average of 3 mins to 11 mins.

If the anticipated outcomes were not reached, acknowledge this, and provide the judge with insight as to why. How did the business respond?

Consider using a table to clearly assist in aligning your answer to Question 3.A.

If the outcomes are still pending, provide what data is available and what the forecasted results may be.

IMAGES

Attach a minimum of two graphics throughout Question 3. to support and enhance your response. For example, an image of any new products or facilities, posters promoting changes that have been implemented.

4. Marketing (15 marks)

A. Who are the business' target market/s, and what marketing strategies did the business implement to differentiate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism experience to these markets? Why were they chosen? 10 marks

This question is looking for a clear understanding of how the business is marketing to its target market/s and why these strategies were chosen.

The response should outline the target market and describe what the marketing strategies were to attract or maintain them.

Begin by outlining who the business has aimed the marketing towards and demonstrate a clear understanding of this market. 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 the product meets their expectations.

Identify how the target market/s are right for the business. E.g., what research has been conducted or used to determine the target customer?

Next, outline the marketing strategies identified for the business. Demonstrate how these marketing strategies were formulated by outlining the research undertaken and how the strategies align with the target markets attributes as well as, where able, local, regional, or state marketing plans.

How do the marketing strategies align with the Business Plan as outlined in Question 1.B?

Then, describe the tactics used to achieve these strategies.

What has been done differently to attract or maintain customers within the qualifying period? Consider, for example, social media, digital or interactive advertising, apps, product packaging, tactical or paid advertising campaigns, relationship marketing. Outline what channels were chosen and why they would be the best fit for the targeted audience?

If the business has been impacted by natural or world events it is important that the judges understand whether the strategies were developed for business growth, business endurance, or whether the strategies were adopted to keep connected to the businesses target market whilst normal business operations were unable to take place.

B. What was the result of these marketing strategies? 5 marks

Detail how the marketing activities mentioned in Q4.A have been successful.

Outline what measures are in place to track the success of these marketing strategies.

Use metrics to measure the outcomes and consider media coverage, social media engagement, increased web traffic, increased bookings.

If providing a snapshot of data within your image allocation, ensure you provide an analysis and/or interpretation of this in your written response, rather than leaving it to the judges to decipher.

If the anticipated outcomes were not reached, acknowledge this, and provide the judge with insight as to why. How did the business respond?

If the outcomes are still pending, provide what data is available and what the forecasted results may be.

Images

Attach a minimum of two graphics throughout Question 4. to support and enhance your response. For example, images of marketing placement (social media screen shots, website, advertisements).

5. Customer Experience (15 marks)

A. How does the business work to consistently deliver memorable and authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism experiences? 7 marks

This question requires you to outline the practices the business has put in place to ensure the delivery of a high-quality authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism experience throughout the visitor experience journey.

Outline how the business is committed to quality customer service throughout all areas of the business. This could include staff training, service principles and policies, staff reward systems, etc.

Consider all points of customer engagement e.g., email, phone, guest greetings/welcome and interaction before, during and after the experience.

Ensure you consider all touch points of the visitor journey pre, post and during the visitor experience.

Ensure that you incorporate the ways in which the business delivers an authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism experience as a part of your visitor experience.

For those businesses that had significant disruption during the qualifying period, consider how you provide quality customer experiences in the alternatives ways in which you operated, such as changed opening times, restricted access to business, kept customers informed during closures etc.

B. How does the business monitor and assess customer satisfaction to improve the visitor experience? 4 marks

Describe how the business monitors and assesses customer satisfaction to ensure continued quality delivery. For example, feedback forms, monitoring social media, blogs, mystery shoppers.

Consider how feedback is actively encouraged and how feedback is used to improve the visitor experience.

Provide a case study/example where a change has been implemented based on customer feedback and/or testimonials which further demonstrate outcomes of quality customer experiences.

C. Describe the inclusive practices integrated across the business. 4 marks

As a part of the delivery of quality customer experiences, demonstrate how the business considers the specific needs of a diverse community.

Provide examples of how the business has made the product/service inclusive or accessible to specific individuals/groups that may have faced barriers to participation previously.

Barriers to participation could include, but are not limited to, cultural reasons, language, physical constraints, intellectual capability, cognitive constraints, dietary requirements, or other specific needs groups e.g., LGBTQIA+.

Explain the outcomes achieved from making the product/service inclusive or accessible to specific individuals/groups. Include a case study to support your answer.

Refer back to the business' target markets – consider each market and what specific products/services are offered to those guests to accommodate their needs.

IMAGES

Attach a minimum of two graphics throughout Question 5. to support and enhance your response. For example, staff communications posters, flow charts of customer service processes, reception cards encouraging feedback.