Queensland Tourism Awards

Entrant Guidebook 2024

2024 QUEENSLAND
tourism
awards

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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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2024 Awards timeline

9am Monday 4 March	**Nominations Open**
5pm Friday 3 May	**Nominations Close** Complete a nomination online (Business name, details, main contact, and category choice) and make your entry fee payment.
Early June - End July	**Site Visits** If applicable, a site visit will be carried out by a QTA judge. It will be prearranged at a mutually convenient time.
3pm Friday 14 June	**Business/Accommodation Standards Due** For businesses that aren't 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.
5pm Thursday 1 August	**Submissions Due**
9am Friday 13 September - 5pm Monday 30 September (TBC)	**RACQ Public Voting** For those in categories 1-26, be sure to promote voting for the RACQ People's Choice Awards for 'Accommodation' or 'Experiences or Services'.
Friday 15 November	**Gala Event** Winners will be announced at the Queensland Tourism Awards on Friday, 15 November 2024 in Brisbane.
March 2025	**Australian Tourism Awards** 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 2025.

Queensland Tourism Awards Categories

Please find a description of the categories and their individual question sets here. Categories 1 – 26 fall under a National Framework provided by the Australian Tourism Industry Council.

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. Award for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Experiences
8. Tourism Retail, Hire and 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 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
20. Self Contained Accommodation
21. 3-3.5 Star Accommodation
22. 4-4.5 Star Deluxe Accommodation
23. 5 Star Luxury Accommodation
24. New Tourism Business
25. Excellence in Food Tourism
26. Excellence in Accessible Tourism
27. Outstanding Contribution by a Volunteer or Volunteer Group
28. The Stephen Gregg Award for Young Achiever of the Year
29. The Marie Watson-Blake Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual

30 & 31. RACQ People's Choice Awards (Accommodation and Experience/Services)

Nomination Process

The nomination process is a brief registration of intent to enter the Queensland Tourism Awards. If you are entering more than one category, a separate entry must be submitted for each. Entrants may only enter one submission 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)

Before nominating, please carefully read the Rules and Regulations document. Please note, **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)

To nominate, visit the national Online Awards Portal 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.

You will then be required to fill out all the relevant fields that relate to your category. This includes a 100-word description of your company / product, which will be used to determine your eligibility for that category. *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.*

Step 3)

Once you have entered your nomination into the portal, you will be directed to pay the nomination fee. After the fee has been paid, the portal will unlock your Business/Accommodation Standards and you will be able to commence your Queensland Tourism Awards Submission.

QTA Fees (incl. GST)	under 25 employees	25 plus employees
QTIC Member	$180.00	$220.00
Non-member	$360.00	$440.00

Terms and Conditions: All withdrawals not submitted by 5pm 3 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

Overview

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.

- *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

Non-accredited entrants in categories 1 - 26 are required to complete the Business Standards. If you have previously completed the Business Standards component in the past 2 years, your responses should be pre-filled, and you simply need to review and update your responses.

For entrants of category 5: QTIC recognises that Ecotourism Australia's ECO Certification achieves the necessary ECO standards required for eligibility in the Ecotourism category.

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 Licensing Compliance
- Sustainable Tourism Marketing & Promotion

Accommodation Standards

To be eligible for any of the accommodation categories (17 – 23), except Unique Accommodation, you are required to meet a specific Star Rating. This is achieved by completing a Star Ratings pre-assessment module (Accommodation Standards) which will calculate a proposed rating, deeming your category acceptability (e.g. 3-3.5 Star Accommodation category entrants must achieve a pre-assessment rating of 3 or 3.5 Stars).

Please Note:

For both the Business Standards and the Accommodation Standards, the awards portal will prompt you on what you will need to supply, and a green tick will appear once each section is completed. Your Business and/or Accommodation Standards **must** be submitted by June 14 (at the latest) to give our Accreditation Team time to assess.

If you have any questions regarding accreditation, please contact QTIC's Accreditation Team.
Email: 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, 2023 - June 30, 2024)**. 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

Word Count

For categories 1 – 25, the written submission is worth between **70% - 90%** of you overall score with a word count of **6,000 - 10,000 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.

Images

Submissions can include up to 25 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.
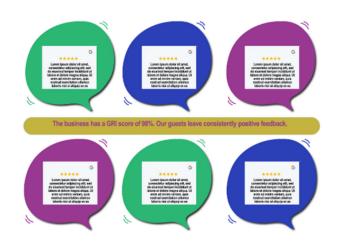
The images uploaded in the Media and Promotional section will be used for promotional material and screen media for the night and are not included in the image count.

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

Poor example: "We have received many **positive testimonials** for our business."

What judges are looking for: "We consistently **receive positive feedback** for our business and as a result, we have a GRI score of 98%. Some of our feedback highlights are: 'made us feel at home from the moment we stepped through the door', 'staff were very friendly and always happy to accommodate our needs', 'Staff surpassed our expectations on what good customer service is."

For more examples of how to use images please read these Image Instructions.

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 click on the "Response Guide" button within the portal after each question as this is what Judges are looking for.

Online Review

A businesses' digital/online presence is an important consumer touch point and plays a significant factor to overall business success. Your Online Review accounts for **10% of your overall score**.

Please find a copy of the standard online questions below. There are 10 yes/no questions worth 1 point each. *For categories 3, 4, 14 and 26 there are separate question sets linked in your category document.*

3 Key Tips: Please provide the correct links to social accounts, Ensure posts are consistent throughout the year, and Ensure your book now is in a prominent position on your website.

Question	Score
Website	
Does the website provide a clear overview of the product/service?	1
Is there a clear call to action on the website?	1
Is the website mobile optimised?	1
Is the website search engine optimised?	1
Social Media	
Is the business actively engaged on social media?	1
Does the business regularly respond to online reviews?	1
Region	
Does their website actively promote the region and encourage visitation?	1
Do their social media pages actively promote the region and encourage visitation?	1
External Online Sources	
Is the business listed on ATDW?	1
Can the entrant be found on at least two other online booking sites from their supplied list?	1

Consumer Rating (GRI Score)

Your Consumer Rating/GRI Score is provided by ReviewPro and is worth between **5% and 20%** of your overall score (please see table on next page). ReviewPro analyses your reviews received across social platforms in the last 12 months to create a GRI. A minimum of 25 reviews must have been received in this 12-month period to formulate a score. Businesses that do not have a GRI will receive a score of 0 for consumer rating.

To request a ReviewPro account, you can do this via the online awards platform. For a more in-depth overview of ReviewPro please see here.

Common ReviewPro Questions

•   What is ReviewPro?

ReviewPro is an online reputation management solution that helps you to manage and improve your online reputation, to deliver better guest experiences.' Throughout the awards period, nominees gain access to a limited dashboard, a very useful tool to monitor and evaluate your online reviews.

•   How is the ReviewPro component of my QTA Awards Score calculated?

The Global Review Index (GRI) is our exclusive online reputation index, and it is calculated using our proprietary algorithm that generates a numerical score (0 to 100), based on the overall scores of reviews collected from 140+ online travel agencies and review sites in more than 45 languages.

•   What can I do 'right now' to ensure I am reaching my potential best practice and best score?

- Read all guest reviews to understand the feedback you are receiving

-Use the Semantic Analysis to identify key areas to be addressed, in order to improve future guests' experiences and improving your guest satisfaction

-Acknowledge guest feedback through management responses, to improve your online presence and change guests' perceptions

Site Visits

The purpose of a site visit is to assess your business/product from the perspective of a visitor and is worth **20% of your overall score** (excluding category 24, where a site visit is conducted but it 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 visit (Between June and July). A representative from your business will be required to meet with the judge for approximately one hour to conduct a 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 your site visit will not necessarily read/judge your written submission. Please also note, not everyone is guaranteed a site visit - there may be a minority that will be virtual.

The percentage of the total score for the site inspection is outlined below:

- HR – 2/20 (10%)
- Business & Marketing Planning – 5/20 (25%)
- Customer Service – 5/20 (25%)
- Business Operations – 3/20 (15%)
- Risk Management – 3/20 (15%)
- Environmental Management – 2/20 (10%)

The following page breaks down the scoring and the word/image allocation for each category:

Category	Word Count	Image Count	Written Submission %	Online Review %	Consumer Rating (GRI) %	Site Visit %	Total %
01. Major Tourist Attractions	6,000 - 10,000	25	70	10	20	20	**120**
02. Tourist Attractions	6,000 - 10,000	25	70	10	20	20	**120**
03. Major Festivals and Events	6,000 - 10,000	25	90	10	N/A	N/A	**100**
04. Festivals and Events	6,000 - 10,000	25	90	10	N/A	N/A	**100**
05. The Steve Irwin Award for Ecotourism	6,000 - 10,000	25	90	10	N/A	20	**120**
06. Cultural Tourism	6,000 - 10,000	25	90	10	N/A	20	**120**
07. Award for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism	6,000 - 10,000	25	90	10	N/A	20	**120**
08. Tourism Retail, Hire and Services	6,000 - 10,000	25	90	10	N/A	20	**120**
09. Visitor Information Services	6,000 - 10,000	25	85	10	5	20	**120**
10. Business Event Venues	6,000 - 10,000	25	90	10	N/A	20	**120**
11. Major Tour and Transport Operators	6,000 - 10,000	25	70	10	20	20	**120**
12. Tour and Transport Operators	6,000 - 10,000	25	70	10	20	20	**120**
13. Adventure Tourism	6,000 - 10,000	25	70	10	20	20	**120**
14. Tourism Marketing and Campaigns	6,000 - 10,000	25	90	10	N/A	N/A	**100**
15. Tourism Restaurants and Catering Services	6,000 - 10,000	25	70	10	20	20	**120**
16. Tourism Wineries, Distilleries and Breweries	6,000 - 10,000	25	70	10	20	20	**120**
17. Caravan and Holiday Parks	6,000 - 10,000	25	70	10	20	20	**120**
18. Hosted Accommodation	6,000 - 10,000	25	70	10	20	20	**120**
19. Unique Accommodation	6,000 - 10,000	25	70	10	20	20	**120**
20. Self Contained Accommodation	6,000 - 10,000	25	70	10	20	20	**120**
21. 3-3.5 Star Accommodation	6,000 - 10,000	25	70	10	20	20	**120**
22. 4-4.5 Star Deluxe Accommodation	6,000 - 10,000	25	70	10	20	20	**120**
23. 5 Star Luxury Accommodation	6,000 - 10,000	25	70	10	20	20	**120**
24. New Tourism Business	6,000 - 10,000	25	90	10	N/A	0	**100**
25. Excellence in Food Tourism	6,000 - 10,000	25	85	10	5	20	**120**
26. Excellence in Accessible Tourism	4,000	10	40	10	N/A	20	**70**
27. Outstanding Contribution by a Volunteer or Volunteer Group	2,500	10	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	**50**
28. The Stephen Gregg Award for Young Achiever of the Year	2,500	10	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	**50**
29. The Marie Watson-Blake Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual	2,500	10	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	**50**
30. RACQ People's Choice Award - Accommodation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**N/A**
31. RACQ People's Choice Award - Experiences or 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

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

Paid Submission Reviewers and Writers

Entrants have the option to use a paid submission writer or submission reviewer. A list will be available on the QTIC website outlining potential submission writers/reviewers. 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

Troubleshooting Awards Portal

If you are experiencing delays or lost data, it could be for one of the following reasons:

Connection Speed and Connection Reliability

This is by far and wide the biggest source of problems in the Awards world, and it has to do with uploading of data. This is particularly articulated when uploading images. One of the simplest solutions is to plug in a LAN cable into your laptop as a cable is hugely faster than going over Wi-Fi.

Images are Too Large

If images are larger than the recommended size (Images must be no bigger than 10MB each in jpeg format - preferably 500dpi files and 1920 x 1080.) then it won't get uploaded. Resizing images to a modest side before uploading is recommend. Also it is recommended to wait until an image has finished uploading before starting on the next one.

Pasting

Entrants tend to put their submission into a Word document, and then copy and paste from the Word document into the submission. *This is recommended* – but the problem comes when trying to paste all at once. It's advisable to paste one section at a time. Pasting from websites is quite common too – and often this has similar issues as there may be hidden characters in a website that add to what is being pasted. Lastly, multiple people working on the same submission can override other's work.

If you experience any issues, please contact awards@qtic.com.au with the following information:

- Business name
- Which submission (if more than one)
- Devise and browser type used
- Specific issues e.g. freezing, loosing information that was saved
- Any screenshots

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.

Note: Hall of Fame Awards – a business who win 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.

Voting will open in September, after submissions have closed. More details will follow.

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 now follows the national structure of Gold, Silver and Bronze winners which are announced during the Gala Awards Ceremony.

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.

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