

26. EXCELLENCE IN ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

This category is open to Victorian tourism businesses or attractions delivering tourism products or services that are welcoming for people of all abilities. Entrants must demonstrate how they have developed a tourism experience to become more accessible.

Important notes:

- This Award is only offered at the Victorian Tourism Awards level. Winners in this category will not proceed to the Australian Tourism Awards.
- Maximum submission length is 8000 words.
- Accessible tourism is identified as offering a service that invites participation by people of all abilities.

1 TOURISM EXCELLENCE (20 marks)

- a) Demonstrate your eligibility for this category as related to the descriptor above and provide a brief overview of the nature and history of your business in developing a meaningful accessible tourism product. (10)
- b) What accessible tourism products, experiences and services do you offer visitors? (6)
- c) How you have demonstrated excellence in reducing any barriers for guests of all physical abilities to participate in your business. (4)

Tips:

- a) *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 location map will be helpful here.*
- b) *The focus of this question is accessible tourism.*
- c) *What makes you different from your competitors – how will you attract people from the accessible tourism market? Have you developed relationships with local organisations, to gain feedback from different community groups? Barriers to participation can be reduced through providing accurate accessible information, improved customer service, purchasing adaptive mobility equipment or by improving the physical environment.*

2 BUSINESS PLANNING (20 marks)

- a) Provide an overview of the key features of your business plan including goals, strategies and outcomes and demonstrate how these lead to providing accessible tourism. (6)
- b) Describe any innovations that have taken place during the qualifying period and demonstrate how these innovations enhance your accessible tourism offering. (10)
- c) What investment has been made in staff training and development in accessible tourism and how has this improved the services provided to your guests? (4)

Tips:

All three questions in this section have two sections so be mindful when responding.

- a) Introduce this section with your mission and/or vision statement. A 3-column table would be useful here to display the information. Make sure you use measurable goals and outcomes.*
- b) 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 providing accessible tourism offering through your business.*
- c) Describe your commitment to training. 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 just financial.*

3 MARKETING (20 marks)

- a) Who are your target markets? (5)
- b) How do you know your product/service meets the needs of the accessible target markets? (5)
- c) What are your unique selling points and demonstrate how you communicate these to the accessible target markets? (5)
- d) Describe the innovative marketing strategies you have implemented to encourage new and/or repeat business from accessible target markets and demonstrate the success of these initiatives. (5)

Tips:

- a) *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. This could mean targeting more young families, the ageing population or wheelchair users.*
- b) *What research have you conducted or used to determine accessible target markets? How do you know the target markets you identified in Q 3 a) are right for you?*
- c) *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 3 a)?*
- d) *What have you done differently to attract your customers? Consider for example; social media, digital advertising, apps. 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.*

4 CUSTOMER SERVICE (20 marks)

- a) Describe your customer service philosophy/values. (5)
- b) Explain how you provide for guests/visitors with specific needs to incorporate a greater focus on accessible tourism (5)
- c) Describe how you measure customer satisfaction and identify areas for improvement. (5)
- d) What processes do you have in place to respond to customers complaints both online and offline, and manage your online reputation? (5)

Tips:

- a) *Consider the systems and procedures you have in place to deliver outstanding service. How do you make an effort to understand their needs, welcome them, respect them, thank them and do business with them?*
- b) *Demonstrate how you consider visitors' special and specific needs. Think about who your customers are and their specific requirements and how you identify who requires the accessible tourism products/experiences and services you offer. Do you offer any specific accessible tourism products, experiences and services to visitors?*
- c) *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.

d) This is a three-part answer.

It is crucial to know what your clients are saying about your business and take measures to protect your business. A sound Reputation Management strategy will outline the processes you have in place to understand how your clients see you, think of you and talk about you and how you take action when feedback is received (negative or positive).

In this response you need to outline your reputation management strategy and what processes you have in place to respond to positive and negative feedback (online and offline), how you measure customer satisfaction and what processes you have in place to monitor your online reputation.

5 SUSTAINABILITY (20 marks)

- a) Demonstrate how your business contributes to the local economy. (6)
- b) Demonstrate how your business engages with and benefits the local community. (7)
- c) Describe how your business cares for the local environment. (7)

Tips:

- a) Explain how your business financially contributes to the local economy in your region. For example; local purchasing, employing locals etc.*
- b) Consider the social benefits you provide to your local community for example; supporting local businesses, product packaging, charitable donations, sponsorship, engagement with community groups, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people etc.*
- d) Explain your commitment to environmental sustainability and detail the activities you conduct in relation to conserving and measuring water, waste management and energy.*

Total score: 100 points.