

28. 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.

NOTE

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

SCORING

Entrants in this category will be scored from the following sources:

- Written submission: 90 marks. The score for each question is highlighted below.
- Online review: 10 marks
- Site visit: 20 marks

Total score: ___/120 points

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

- Respond to the following questions using maximum 8,000 words and 25 images. Please note Q1 (COVID-19 & Bushfire Impact) is not included in the word count and it will not contribute to the overall score.
- Submissions are made via the [Australian Tourism Awards portal](#).
- A good answer should include:



1. COVID-19 & BUSHFIRE IMPACT (0 marks)

Provide the judges with an understanding of your business situation resulting from the national and world events (e.g., COVID-19, bushfire) during the qualifying period. Please answer:

1. *Outline how many months in the qualifying period you were operational for.*
2. *Describe what the COVID-19 business restrictions were on your business.*
3. *Describe the impact these events had on your business.*

NOTE: These responses do not contribute to your overall score but provide a clearer picture for judges to understand what you have been able to achieve. This is factual information allowing you to tell your business story in your written submission.

2. INTRODUCTION (20 marks)

Please provide an overview of your tourism products, experiences and services including the nature and history of the business in developing a meaningful accessible tourism product.

Response Guidance

- ❖ Set the story of your product, experience, service and give the judge insight into the product, experience, service on offer. Take the judge on a journey of your business product/service; describe the visitor experience, where and how it began, how you have developed the product over time.
- ❖ This is where the judges (and auditors) will gain an understanding of how you fit 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 focus of this question is accessible tourism.
- ❖ Your response should demonstrate why your business should be considered as an award-winning business for accessible tourism by highlighting your points of difference and what makes you stand out. Specify amenities, products, services or facilities that enhance visitor satisfaction and accessibility.
- ❖ Demonstrate your commitment to excellence by explaining the values and philosophy of your business, how the business has been actively involved with and contributed to the tourism industry (locally, regionally and nationally), and your commitment to accessibility and to offering a service that invites participation by people of all abilities.
- ❖ Tourism excellence can also be demonstrated by listing any awards you have won and accreditations you hold.
- ❖ Use graphics to support and enhance your response provided. 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.
- ❖ Note: barriers to participation can be reduced through providing accurate accessible information, improved customer service, purchasing adaptive mobility equipment or by improving the physical environment.

3. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (25 marks)

During the qualifying period, what have you implemented to enhance your accessible tourism offering and/or to provide business recovery and resilience in the wake of national and world events (i.e., COVID-19, bushfires)?

Response Guidance

- ❖ This question seeks to understand how you have improved the product, experience, service within the qualifying period. Additionally, or alternatively, it seeks to understand what strategies were implemented for business endurance through a year of challenging national and world events.
- ❖ To respond, consider what strategies, innovations and/or developments the business has introduced or updated to enhance your accessible tourism offering. An enhancement could include, for example, a new experience or facility, updating point of sale processes, to changing to ethically sourced supplies. Actions that supported the ongoing survival of your business could include, for example,

diversifying your product or experience, seeking alternative ways for the delivery of the experience, product or service.

- ❖ *The response should also demonstrate why the strategy, innovation and/or development was implemented and how this enhanced accessibility and the visitor experience, and/or how it supported business endurance. The judges will be looking for an understanding of what prompted the innovation, development, improvement, 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.*
- ❖ *You could also consider what environmental, social, economic and ethical initiatives or achievements were made during the qualifying period.*
- ❖ *An insightful response would include the research and planning that was undertaken as well as the outcome/s of the innovation, development, improvement and how they align with your business' main goals and strategies.*
- ❖ *Use graphics to support and enhance your response provided. For example, an image of any new products or facilities, posters promoting changes that have been implemented.*

4. MARKETING (20 marks)

What marketing strategies did you implement in the qualifying year to attract and meet the needs of accessible target markets to support business growth and/or business recovery and resilience? Why were these strategies chosen and what was the result?

Response Guidance

- ❖ *This question is looking for a clear understanding of how you are marketing to the accessible target markets.*
- ❖ *You should begin by outlining who you have aimed your 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 your product meets their expectations.*
- ❖ *Identify how the target market/s are right for your business. What research have you conducted or used to determine your target customer?*
- ❖ *You should then provide a clear overview of the innovative approaches you have taken to marketing and what you have done differently to attract and/or connect with your customers within the qualifying period. Consider for example, social media, digital or interactive advertising, apps, product packaging, tactical or paid advertising campaigns, relationship marketing.*
- ❖ *Explain why these marketing strategies were selected by aligning with your accessible target markets attributes as well as local, regional or state marketing plans. It is important that the judge understands whether the strategies were developed for business endurance, or whether the strategies were adopted to keep connected to your target market whilst normal business operations were unable to take place.*
- ❖ *Detail how these new, different, unique marketing activities have been successful. You should consider metrics to measure the outcomes and consider media coverage, social media engagement, increased web traffic, increased bookings etc.*
- ❖ *Use graphics to support and enhance your response. For example, images of marketing placement (social media screen shots, website, advertisements).*

5. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (25 marks)

How does your business provide quality visitor experiences and demonstrate inclusive and accessible practices?

Response Guidance

- ❖ *This question requires you to outline the practices you have put in place to ensure the delivery of high-quality customer service throughout the visitor experience journey.*
- ❖ *For those businesses that had significant disruption during the qualifying period, you should consider how you provided quality customer experiences in the alternative ways in which you operated, e.g., communicated to customers during changing restrictions, kept customers informed during closers, how you stayed connected with them, etc.*
- ❖ *Consider all points of customer engagement, e.g., email, phone, guest greetings/welcome and interaction during and after the experience.*
- ❖ *Outline how you are committed to quality customer service throughout all areas of the business. This could include staff training, service principles and policies, staff reward systems etc.*
- ❖ *Describe how your business monitors and assesses customer service to ensure continued quality delivery and that you are meeting the needs of the accessible tourism market. For example: feedback forms, monitoring social media, blogs, mystery shoppers etc.*
- ❖ *Consider how you actively encourage feedback and how feedback is used to improve the visitor experience. It may be useful to provide a case study/example where you have implemented a change based on customer feedback and/or testimonials which further demonstrate outcomes of quality customer experiences.*
- ❖ *As a part of your delivery of quality visitor experiences you need to demonstrate how you consider visitors' special and specific needs, in addition to accessibility, and recognises the needs of a diverse community. This can include, but is not limited, to cultural, language, dietary and other specific needs, e.g., groups, special interest, LGBTQ etc.*
- ❖ *Provide examples of how you catered for customers with specific needs, explain the outcome or successes. A case study would be beneficial here.*
- ❖ *Use graphics to support and enhance your response. For example: staff communications posters, flow charts of customer service processes, reception cards encouraging feedback.*