

## CHANGES & UPDATES

The Australian Tourism Awards have always been about celebrating the hard work and dedication made to create quality tourism experiences. This year we also want to celebrate resilience.

2020 saw many challenges faced by businesses, with some similar and some different across the states and territories, and sectors. This year's awards program will continue to celebrate excellence, to reward business innovation and exceptional customer service, as well as championing the resilience of our industry.

The Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) have made some adjustments to the awards program and the rules of entry in 2021 to enable businesses to share their stories on how they overcame the difficulties experienced as a result of the bushfires and COVID-19. Furthermore, we have listened to feedback on incorporating a consumer element to the judging process and we are pleased to announce that the 2021 program will bring together a more encompassing scoring system where various elements, including consumer reviews, will contribute to the overall score.

Below is a summary of the changes for the 2021 Victorian Tourism Awards. Please note these changes are applied in the national level, and across all States and Territories.

### QUALIFYING PERIOD

- The qualifying period for this year's awards will be adjusted to account for the variances in closed businesses across the states over the past 12 months. Therefore, the qualifying period is extended from **1 July 2019 to 30 June 2021**.
- An exception to the rule applies to the **New Tourism Business** category. See the [rules and criteria](#) for more details.

### CATEGORIES

As a part of the review for 2021, the participation in various categories were examined and the following changes were determined to more adequately reflect the entrants to the category:

- 'Specialised Tourism Services' has been replaced by 'Tourism Retail & Hire Services'
- 'Destination Marketing' has been renamed 'Tourism Marketing & Campaigns'
- 'Standard Accommodation' has been renamed '3-3.5 Star Accommodation'
- 'Deluxe Accommodation' has been renamed '4-4.5 Star Deluxe Accommodation'
- 'Luxury Accommodation' has been renamed '5 Star Luxury Accommodation'

[Click here](#) to view the full list of categories.

### QUESTIONS

In 2021, businesses can choose what they want to focus on - strategies implemented to attract or grow and/or strategies implemented as a part of their recovery and resilience to COVID-19. Therefore, the existing questions have been amended to enable a response from the business which is relevant to them.

Whilst Responsible Tourism/Sustainability is an incredibly important part of any business, the challenges faced by many during the qualifying period make it difficult to respond to this question, though at no fault of

their own. So, rather than disadvantage businesses, the Responsible Tourism section has been temporarily suspended in 2021 – except for *03. Major Festivals & Events* and *04. Festivals & Events*.

The business innovation and excellence in social, economic, environmental and ethical tourism can form part of your response to the 'Business Development' question.

Most categories\* will have a revised question set which focuses on five key areas:

- COVID-19 & bushfire impact to the business (0 marks)
- Introduction to the business
- Business development
- Marketing
- Customer experience

\*The following categories will have an updated set of questions that are specific to the individual category:

- Major Festivals & Events
- Festivals & Events
- Ecotourism
- Cultural Tourism
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island Tourism
- Tourism Marketing & Campaigns
- New Tourism Business

### WORD COUNT

Having temporarily suspended the Responsible Tourism question, the 2021 program will also temporarily drop the word count to **8000 words**.

Please note this also applies to:

- Major Festivals & Events and Festivals & Events – the Responsible Tourism question still applies to these two categories, but the word count is reduced to 8000 words.
- State categories: 26. Tourism Education and Training, 27. Local Government Award for Tourism and 28. Excellence in Accessible Tourism

### SCORING

Entries will be scored on the following elements:

- Written submission
- Online review\*
- Consumer rating\*
- Site visit

Please note that site visits are not compulsory as a national standard. Therefore, the site visit score in Victoria is added to the total score outlined for the various Australian Tourism Awards categories, and in some instances, the total score available to an entrant will be 120. All business categories (1-28) will receive a site visit, however, in some cases, a score is not attributed to the site visit.

*\*Online review & consumer rating: these elements may vary depending on the category entered.*

### ONLINE REVIEW

The entrant's online activities will be assessed by the panel of judges and will include:

- The business website
- The business social media channels
- The business search engine optimisation
- The business external listing sources

The online review scoring will occur at the State/Territory level only and will account for 10% of the entrant's overall score.

### CONSUMER RATING

The consumer rating score will account for 20% of an entrant's overall score, with some exceptions\*. The consumer rating will capture the entire qualifying period and will be derived from the GRI (average score of all online reviews) provided by ReviewPro.

Award entrants will now have access to a complimentary [ReviewPro](#) account, via the Quality Tourism Framework dashboard for the duration of the program.

\*Due to the nature of the below categories, consumer rating will not apply to:

- Major Festivals & Events
- Festivals & Events
- Ecotourism
- Cultural Tourism
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island Tourism
- Business Event Venues
- Tourism Marketing & Campaigns
- New Tourism Business
- State categories: Tourism Education & Training, Local Government Award for Tourism and Excellence in Accessible Tourism

\*For those categories where there is a mix of products included, then the consumer rating value will be 5%.

This includes:

- Tourism Retail & Hire Services
- Excellence in Food Tourism

Please note: a minimum of 25 reviews must have been received over the qualifying period across the 175+ online review sites that ReviewPro captures from in order to receive a GRI score. Businesses that do not have a GRI will receive a score of 0 for the consumer rating score.