

4. FESTIVALS & EVENTS

This category recognises tourism leisure festivals, events and exhibitions that enhance the profile/awareness and appeal of the destination they are held in as well as creating economic impact, increased visitation and community involvement.

This category is open to (but not limited to) sporting, arts, historical, cultural, literary, humorous, culinary and general interest festivals, events and exhibitions with local, interstate and international visitor attendance under 50,000 or NOT recognised by the STO as a major event on their event calendar.

NOTE

- The qualifying period for the 2021 program has been extended to two years - 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2021.
- For the Festivals and Events categories, where multiple events have been held within the qualifying period, each event can make a submission, and each submission must be specific to one event. E.g., Festival Australia 2019 and Festival Australia 2020 - each submission would focus on the activities, marketing, etc. for the singular event.

SCORING

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

- Written submission: 95 marks. The score for each question is highlighted below.
 - Online review: 5 marks
 - Site visit: 0 marks. Due to the nature of entrants in this category, the site visit will be for verification purposes only, therefore no points will be awarded.
- Total score: ___/100 points

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

- Respond to the following questions using maximum 8,000 words and 25 images. Please note Q1 (COVID-19 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 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 second half of the qualifying period (1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021) you were operational for.
2. Describe what the business restrictions were on your business e.g., gatherings.
3. Describe the impact of travel restrictions on your business e.g., border closures.

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)

A. Please provide an overview of the nature and history of your festival/event. 15 marks

Response Guidance

- ❖ *Set the story of your festival/event and give the judge insight into the visitor experience on offer. It is recommended that you begin by explaining your reason for the development of the event, how it started and why the chosen time of the year.*
- ❖ *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.*
- ❖ *You should then take the judge on a journey of your festival/event, including key people or organisations involved, details of how long it has been running, any significant changes that have happened over time or how the festival or event might have evolved.*
- ❖ *Ensure that key information on the festival or event duration and scale is included here – whether it is a single day event, weekend or longer, whether it is a daytime or evening event, number and type of venues, the capacity of the venue(s) etc.*
- ❖ *Your response should demonstrate why your festival/event should be considered as an award-winning tourism business by highlighting your points of difference and what sets you apart from other festivals/events. Specify amenities or facilities that enhance visitor satisfaction.*
- ❖ *Use graphics to support and enhance your response provided. For example, a map of the festival/event, images of the festival/event and any specific facilities, amenities, services you have highlighted in your response.*

B. How has the festival/event worked to enhance the profile and appeal of the destination it was held in and stimulated economic activity within the qualifying period? 5 marks

Response Guidance

- ❖ *The judges are looking to understand the positive impact your festival/event has made to the host destination.*
- ❖ *If the event was held prior to COVID-19 disruptions, you should demonstrate the direct benefit to the host destination by using measurable data from the qualifying period to demonstrate how the festival/event has contributed to the local economy. Consider, for example, an increase in visitor numbers, economic spend, awareness, etc.*
- ❖ *If the event was held after COVID-19 disruptions, consider how the event supported the destination in its recovery.*
- ❖ *Use graphics to support and enhance your response provided. For example, a chart demonstrating economic growth and supporting the data you have provided in the submission.*

3. EVENT DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATION AND MARKETING (30 marks)

A. What strategies did the festival/event develop and implement that were designed to enhance the visitor experience? 10 marks

Response Guidance

- ❖ *This question seeks to understand how your festival/event has improved the visitor experience. To respond, consider what strategies, innovations and/or developments the business has introduced or updated and why. An enhancement could include, for example, a new experience or facility, updating point of sale processes or changing to ethically sourced supplies.*
- ❖ *It is understood that festivals/events may have implemented and/or designed strategies outside of the qualifying period. These can be included – but the festival/event must have been held in the qualifying period.*
- ❖ *The response should demonstrate why the strategy, innovation and/or development was implemented and how this enhances the visitor experience. The judges will be looking for an understanding of what prompted the improvement, e.g., was it a result of guest feedback, environmental/site considerations, change in market demand, etc.*
- ❖ *An insightful response would include the research and planning that was undertaken as well as the outcome/s of these and how they align with the business' main goals and strategies.*
- ❖ *If the event was held in the second half of the qualifying period, consider what measures were put in place to ensure COVID-19 protocols were met whilst providing an enhanced visitor experience.*
- ❖ *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.*

B. What plans and/or strategies have you initiated in the qualifying period to ensure the future sustainability of the event and how are you innovating to mitigate the challenges facing your event (business risks)? 10 marks

Response Guidance

- ❖ *The judge is seeking a proactive approach to planning to support the continued running of the festival/event.*
- ❖ *You should consider a range of risks impacting the sustainability of the festival/event which could include, for example, ongoing funding/sponsorship, local community support, environmental/site considerations, media backlash, guest safety, continuing or return of restrictions, etc.*
- ❖ *Where able, detail the figures to provide a greater response, e.g., how is the event funded, and what steps have been made to manage this (e.g., secured ongoing sponsorship). You could consider what partnerships, sponsorship, or stakeholder engagement you have secured to assist in the continued success of the festival/event.*
- ❖ *If your event is a one off, you should ensure this is clearly demonstrated to the judge. Then, to respond to this question, focus your response on how you mitigated the risks and challenges faced by your festival/event.*
- ❖ *Use graphics to support and enhance your response.*

C. What innovative marketing and communications strategies did you use during the qualifying period to promote the festival/event. Why were these strategies chosen and what was the result? 10 marks

Response Guidance

- ❖ *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 your customers within the qualifying period. Consider for example, social media, digital and interactive advertising, apps, product packaging, tactical or paid advertising campaigns, relationship marketing.*
- ❖ *Outline why these marketing strategies were selected and how the marketing strategy aligns with local, regional or state marketing plans.*
- ❖ *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).*

4. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (25 marks)

A. How is the event experience developed, delivered, evaluated and continually improved (for ongoing events) to ensure high attendee satisfaction levels and inclusivity? 15 marks

Response Guidance

- ❖ *This question requires you to outline what practices you have put in place to ensure a high quality of customer service throughout the festival/event.*
- ❖ *Outline how you are committed to quality customer service throughout all areas of the festival/event. This could include staff training, service principles and policies, staff reward systems, volunteer orientation and induction and other training programs for onsite event staff, etc.*
- ❖ *Consider all points of customer engagement, e.g., email, phone, guest greetings/welcome, during and after the festival/event. Your response should consider what training is in place for staff and/or volunteers and how this has improved the festival/event.*
- ❖ *Once you have provided an overview of how customer service is delivered for high attendee satisfaction, you should consider how you measure, monitor and assess customer service to ensure quality delivery, 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.*
- ❖ *Demonstrate how you consider visitors' special and specific needs and recognises the needs of a diverse community. This can include, but is not limited to, cultural, language, physical, intellectual, dietary and other specific needs e.g., groups, special interest, LGBTQ, etc.*
- ❖ *Use graphics to support and enhance your response. For example, staff communications posters, flow charts of customer service processes, reception cards encouraging feedback.*

B. How is the event integrated with the local, regional, or state tourism industry? 10 marks

Response Guidance

- ❖ Provide the judges with an understanding of how your festival/event supports the growth and development of the local, regional and state tourism industry. The judges are seeking a festival/event which has been actively involved with and contributed to the tourism industry.
- ❖ Your response should consider how your event aligns with host community tourism strategies, for example, local government economic development plans, local/regional/state tourism development strategies, etc.
- ❖ Once you have clearly demonstrated how they align, you should then demonstrate the contribution to tourism that is made, for example increase in visitor numbers, awareness, local tourism employment. Where possible, use measurable data.

5. RESPONSIBLE TOURISM (20 marks)

How has your festival/event considered and progressed its environmental, social, economic and ethical responsibilities during the qualifying period?

Response Guidance

- ❖ This question requires you to outline how your festival/event has considered and taken action on reducing or improving (whichever applied) its overall impact within the four areas.
- ❖ You should break this question into four parts and consider using a table to assist in your answer:
 1. **Environmental**
 - Consider the following:
 - How have you considered your environmental impact?
 - What have you done to be environmentally responsible?
 - Some examples of how you demonstrate environmental responsibility are: water conservation, waste management/reduction/recycling, fuel and energy reduction, carbon reduction/offset, reuse initiatives in place.
 - The inclusion of actual measurement data including the amounts saved/reduced in comparison to the previous year (or multiple years if you have good records) may enhance your response.
 2. **Social**
 - Outline how you have considered the impact of your business on local people and businesses
 - Your response should consider non-monetary examples
 - Some examples of how you demonstrate social responsibility are:
 - a. Supporting local businesses, product packaging, charitable donations, sponsorship, engagement with community groups
 - b. Employing locals and the impact their employment has had on the person, mentoring other businesses, speaking at schools
 - c. Work experience opportunities that are offered
 3. **Economic**
 - Detail how your festival/event supports the local economy
 - Some examples are:
 - a. Local purchasing, % of employment of local people.

- b. Operators who stock and sell a local artisan's products, or stock local produce in minibars, hampers, outlets and how the business has boomed because of it for the manufacturer/producer*
- c. Waiving conference room fees for local not-for-profit groups to give them somewhere to meet which allows the group to keep going*
- *You should determine the percentage of total contribution. E.g., '75% of all our expenses were spent in X region.'*

4. Ethical

- *Outline how the festival/event has considered its ethical responsibilities*
- *Some examples of how you demonstrate ethical responsibilities are:*
 - a. The engagement and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.*
 - b. Cultural or historical representation.*
 - c. Animal welfare, etc.*

Use graphics to support and enhance your response.