

CATEGORY 25. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

This category is open to tourism operators that exemplify a strong commitment to sustainable and innovative business practices. The award will recognise and showcase successful tourism businesses that set out to minimise their environmental impact, conserve natural resources, respect local cultures and benefit local communities.

Important note:

It is recommended that entrants in this category provide a quote in relation to your business' sustainability practices. Examples of possible referees include:

- 1. Environmental Groups/Foundations & Cultural Groups*
- 2. Government Agencies – Local, State or Federal*
- 3. Journalists/editors of local publications or travel/tourism publications*
- 4. University Professors/academics*

Important reminders:

- Entrants must ensure their answers specifically refer only to the product and category they are entering.*
- Entrants are encouraged to show evidence of **both** an innovative approach to sustainability **and** use of tourism-related accreditation programs and respected sustainability accreditation schemes.*

Question 1. Business, Product and Marketing (20 points)

- a) Provide a general overview of the nature and history of your business/product. You must demonstrate your eligibility for entry in this category as outlined in the descriptor above.
- b) Describe the key features of your business plan and how you have embedded sustainability principles and practices.
- c) Who are your target markets and how did you identify them?
- d) Describe how your business/product is competitively positioned and differentiated in the marketplace through your sustainability philosophy.
- e) Describe your marketing strategies and how you use your distinctive difference to attract your target markets.

TIPS: *Part a) Consider stating where you are located geographically and including a picture to help judges visualise your business.*

Part b) Include your business vision for sustainability within your answer.

Parts c & d) Explain what trends you are tapping in the marketplace and how you use ideas, destination or site attributes and services to provide an experience that is hard to match or copy by others. What gives you your competitive edge?

Part e) Remember to ensure that your marketing strategies are in line with the ACCC's 'green marketing guidelines'.

Question 2: Economic Sustainability (20 points)

- a) Demonstrate your financial viability and growth and if applicable, how sustainable practices have enhanced your business profitability. Also, provide any evidence of any triple bottom line (or similar) metrics.
- b) Describe the sustainability risks you have identified for your business and the specific risk mitigation strategies you have put in place.

TIPS: Part (b) would benefit from the inclusion of graphs illustrating these results within your answer or a profit & loss statement in your appendix. If you are a recent start-up business, you may not be achieving viable cash flows at this point in time, but you should demonstrate whether you are on track with respect to your forward business plan's anticipated cash flows. If you are a 'not-for-profit' business you should demonstrate the means of ensuring the sustainability of a positive financial position.

Question 3. Environmental Sustainability (20 points)

- a) Provide evidence that you measure and understand your environmental footprint (fuel, energy, water, waste) in particular any use of accredited methodologies or audit techniques.
- b) What major initiatives have you introduced to reduce your environmental footprint and what are the outcomes?
- c) Describe any initiatives you have introduced to ensure that your staff and customers have awareness and ownership of your business' sustainability policies and are aware of local environmental conditions and adapt behaviour accordingly.
- d) Beyond your own operations, provide evidence of any contribution you have made to improve local environmental conditions and how has your work inspired change in the community.

TIPS: Environmental sustainability initiatives could include fuel, energy and water reduction; site analysis responses; building design and location; waste management; recycling; tree planting; engaging environmentally sensitive procedures; use of alternative technologies; accreditation such as Greenhouse Friendly accreditation, ISO 14000 Accreditation, Green Globe Certification, Eco Certification Program (previously known as NEAP); contribution to research programs etc.

Question 4. Community and Cultural Sustainability (20 points)

- a) How does what you offer add value to the destination experience of the area?
- b) Describe how your business or product reflects and respects local culture and communities.
- c) Provide any evidence that your business or product has contributed to local community development (including employment, local products and services) and will continue to do so into the future.

TIPS: Part a) Consider how your product is linked to and 'bundled' with complementary experiences and products to create a more appealing destination to increase lengths of stay.

Part c) With regard to the use of local products and services, this could include food and beverage suppliers, service providers, trades people, and local building material. With regard to employment, benefits could include apprenticeships, in-kind contributions, ratio of local residents employed, partnerships with community-based organisations etc. Consider how your business/product inspires young people to adopt practices for ongoing sustainability into the future.

Question 5. Innovation (20 points)

- a) Describe any innovative sustainability practices that you have introduced that are unique to your business that may position you as a role model for the industry.
- b) Detail your sustainability plans for the future.

TIPS: This question is designed to give due acknowledgement to specific innovation that sets a leadership example in sustainable tourism.

Part b) Do you have a sustainability roadmap or management plan?

Total points: 100 points