BUSINESS AWARDS

How to write an Award Winning Entry Guide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01. Introduction

- Why you should enter the Business Awards

02. 2026 Categories

03. Tips and Tricks

- Understanding the criteria
- Writing your story
- Highlighting key achievements
- Using data effectively
- Leverage innovation and creativity
- Focusing on your impact

04. Common pitfalls to avoid

- Final checklist before you submit your entry

05. Entry Portal Guide

01. Introduction

The 2025 Business Awards recognises growth, entrepreneurship and success across NSW. It's an opportunity for entrants to showcase their business or an outstanding individual and gain recognition for the hard work and results achieved.

Entering the Business Awards allows businesses the opportunity to:

- **Gain recognition at a regional and state level**
- **Publicly recognise and reward excellence**
- **Encourage and celebrate creativity, professionalism and innovation**
- **Improve their employee engagement by involving their employees in the entry process**
- **Boost staff morale through the recounting of successes in their business.**

Winning a Business Award is more than a trophy. It's a recognition of your business excellence, innovation, and hard work. Writing an award-winning entry requires careful planning, a compelling story, and evidence to back up your success story. This booklet will guide you through each step of the process with practical tips and tricks to help your entry stand out.

Enquiries

For any further enquiries, please contact: businessawards@businessnsw.com

02. 2026 Categories

Individual

- Outstanding Employee
- Outstanding Young Business Leader
- Outstanding Business Leader - 20 Employees and Under
- Outstanding Business Leader - 21 Employees and Over.

Business

- Excellence in Micro Business
- Excellence in Small Business
- Excellence in Medium Business
- Excellence in Large Business
- Outstanding New Business
- Excellence in International Business
- Employer of Choice - 20 Employees and Under
- Employer of Choice - 21 Employees and Over
- Excellence in Innovation
- Excellence in Sustainability
- Outstanding Community Organisation
- Excellence in Diversity & Inclusion
- Excellence in Workplace Health & Wellbeing
- Outstanding Local Chamber
- Business of the Year

Visitor Economy

- Outstanding Experience
- Outstanding Visitor & 24-Hour Economy Collaboration
- Excellence in Sustainable Tourism.

03. Tips and Tricks

1. Understanding the Criteria

Every category has specific criteria that judges will use when judging submissions. Make sure you:

- Carefully review the required points laid out in the category criteria
- Highlight the key elements such as leadership, innovation, measurable results and it's impact.
- Reinforce your achievements by including relevant statistics, clearly demonstrating growth and success to the judges.

Pro Tip: Create a checklist based on the criteria to ensure you've covered everything.

Example:

Assume you are entering into the Outstanding Young Business Leader category.
The entry criteria for the category states:

"*Entrants are required to demonstrate their ability to lead and inspire people, showcasing exceptional leadership skills, while demonstrating how they have effectively utilised resources to achieve successful outcomes and driven innovation over the past 18 months of being an Outstanding business leader. To be eligible to enter this category, the individual must have held senior management or executive level position within their organisation for a minimum of 18 months at the time of entry.*"

From the above criteria, these are the below checklists to ensure your entry is stands out.

- **Eligibility** - You have held a senior management or executive-level position within your organisation for at least 18 months at the time of submission.
- **Leadership and people management -** You have clearly demonstrated your ability to lead and inspire people within your organisation with examples of exceptional leadership skills, such as motivating teams, driving collaboration and mentoring others.
- **Effective resource utilisation -** You have provided specific examples of how you have effectively utilised resources (e.g. Time management tools, budget, training tools and resources, workshops) to achieve successful outcomes. You have described strategies implemented to enhance resource usage and their measurable impact.

- **Innovation:** You have highlighted innovative initiatives or strategies you introduced within the past 18 months. Include examples of how these innovations positively impacted your organisation, people and industry where relevant.
- **Achievements and Outcomes:** You have outlined measurable outcomes that demonstrated your success as a leader (e.g. revenue growth, operational efficiency, team development). Include specific metrics and quantitative data to support your written entry.

2. Writing Your Story

Your entry should highlight your journey and achievements as a business or an outstanding business leader or employee. Use clear concise language. Avoid jargon and ensure your story flows logically from problem to solution to outcome.

Start with the problem: What challenge or need did you address?

Describe your solution: How did you overcome these challenges? This is the part you want to tell the judges the innovative steps you took to overcome these challenges and the effect it had on your business and stakeholders both internal and external.

End with the Outcome: What measurable results can you show to prove the positive outcomes your strategy had on your business and stakeholders both internal and external.3

3. Highlighting Key Achievements

Focus on what makes your achievements unique and impactful:

- What sets your achievements apart from the next business or industry?
- What specific goals did you meet or exceed?

Example: *Instead of writing, "We improved customer service,' you would write, "We reduced response time by 30% and increased satisfaction rating by 20% within six months."*

4. Using Data and Evidence Effectively

Judges want to see proof of your claims. Provide quantitative data (e.g. revenue growth, customer satisfaction scores). Use real numbers wherever possible and explain their significance.

5. Leveraging Innovation and Creativity

Judges value fresh idea and unique approaches. Show how you:

- Introduced new processes, products or strategies
- Solved problems in innovative ways
- Differentiated yourself from competitors

Pro Tip: Highlight the “Why” behind your innovation and its impact

6. Focus On Your Impact

Explain the broader impact of your work, whether economic, environmental or social.

- Who benefited from your work?
- How did it contribute to your organisation and/or industry
- What long-term changes have occurred as a result

Pro Tip: Link your achievements to the bigger picture, such as fostering sustainability or driving industry growth.

04. Common pitfalls to avoid

Here are some common pitfalls to avoid during your entry writing process:

- **Vague responses:** Be specific and detailed in your answers.
- **Repetition:** Avoid repeating the same information in different sections.
- **Jargon:** Write in clear, simple language that all judges can understand.
- **Neglecting the criteria:** Tailor every response to the category requirements.
- **Poor time management:** Ensure you have ample time to draft, review and make necessary changes to your entry. Consider having someone review it for fresh perspective.

Final Checklist before you submit your entry

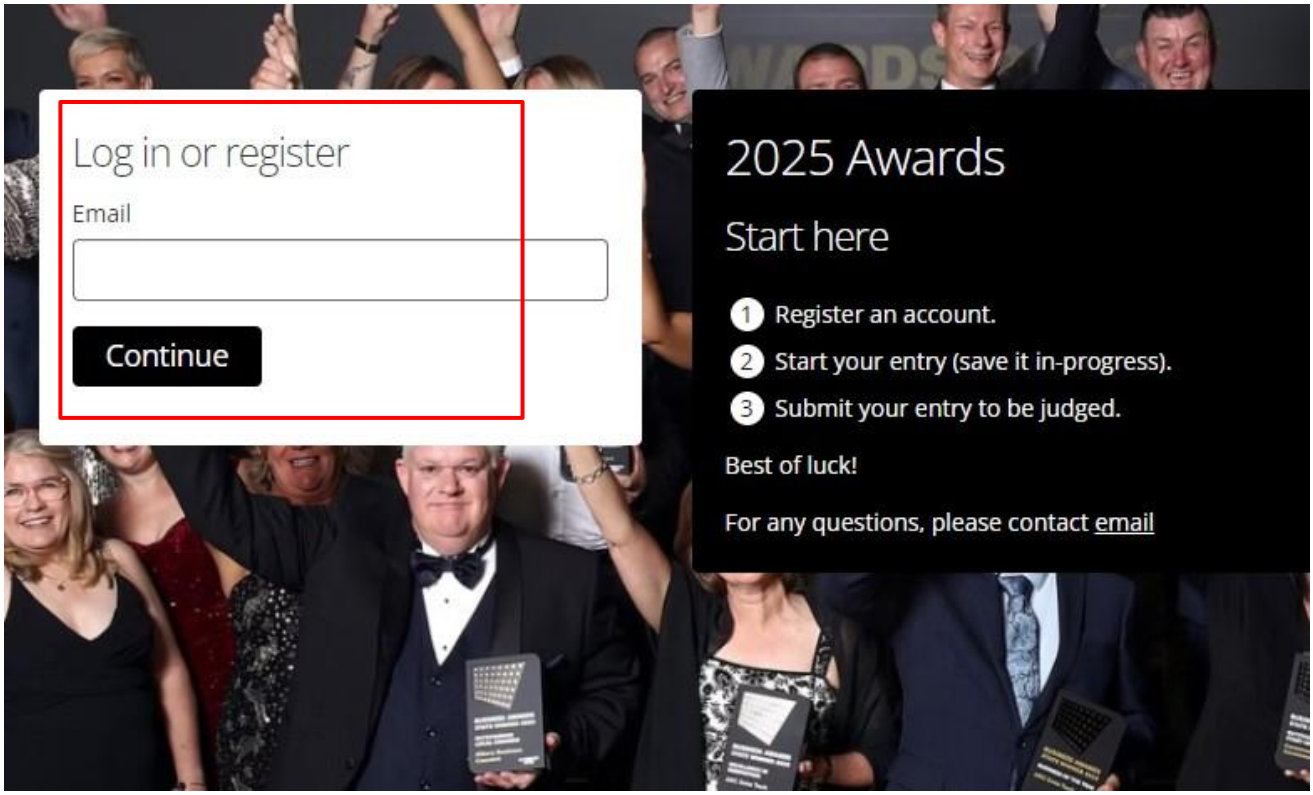
Before you submit your entry, make sure:

- You have reviewed the category criteria and ensured your entry aligns with all requirements.
- You have completed all required sections of the submission form.
- You have proofread your entry for errors and clarity.

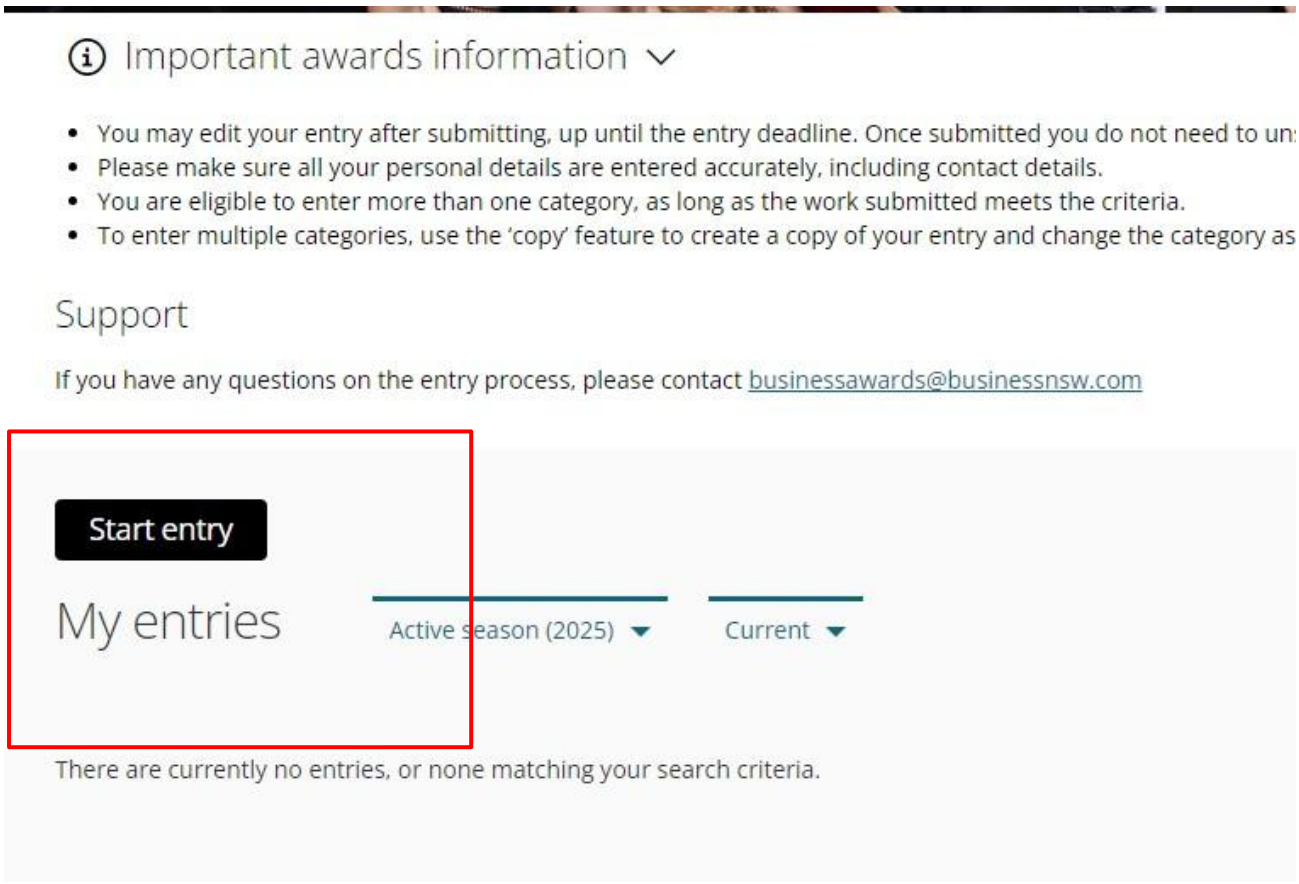
Po Tip: Ask a colleague or mentor to review your submission for feedback and ensure its clear and concise.

05. Entry portal

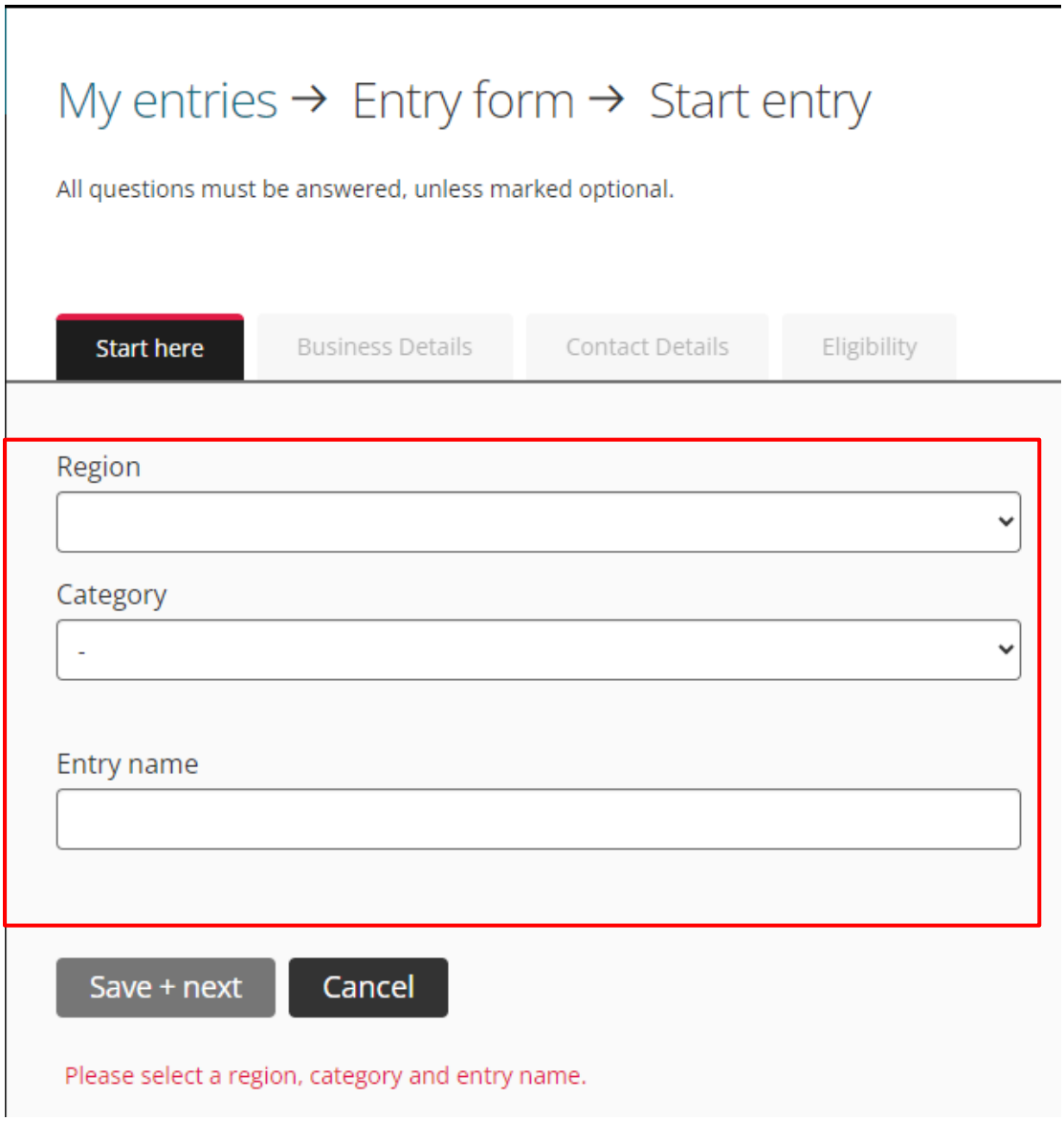
- The judging portal can be accessed here: https://enter.businessnsw.com
  Please enter your provided log in details to view the entries to be judged.
- Enter your provided login details to view the entries to be judged.



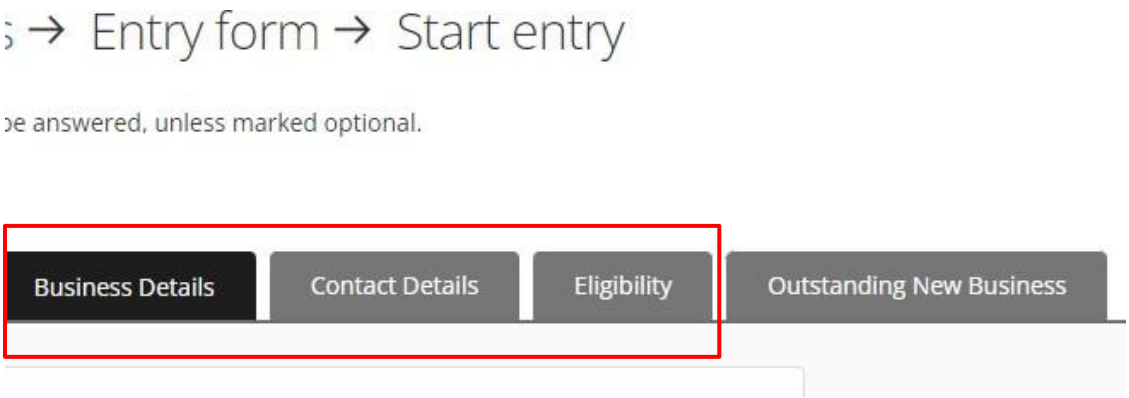
- Once you have successfully signed in, you will be directed to your individual entrant account.
- To start your entry, click on the start entry button



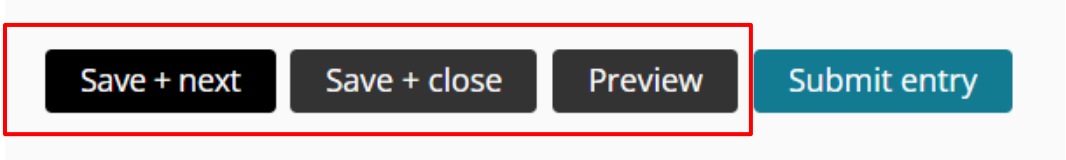
- Once you click the start entry you will be directed to select the region with whom your entering their awards. Please ensure you select the right region.
- You will then need to select the category with which your entering and then the name of your entry



- Once the details are filled in the portal, click between the tabs to move to the next stages of questions required for the entry.
- There are 4 tabs that will require information before you get to the category tab to answer the entry submission questions.
- These are the Business details tab, Contact details tab, Eligibility tab and then your category questions



- At the bottom of the entry form page, you have 4 options. You can save and next, which will take you through all the form tabs for you to fill and complete or the save and close option, which allows you to save your progress and return back to complete your submission at a later date.
- Please note, you will only have till the awards program submission deadline date to complete your submission.
- Once an entry is submitted, you have until the end submissions deadline to make any further edits. Once submissions deadline is up. Access to the submitted entry will not be visible.
- The preview button allows you to see the completed version of your entry that the judges will be reviewing.



06. Conclusion

Additional Resources and Tools

Tools to Enhance Your Entry:

- **Canva:** Create professional visuals and infographics to attach to your submissions. These graphics are used as promotional materials for entrants if you emerge as a finalist or winner so make it count.
- **Google Analytics:** Gather data on your website performance and customer behaviour. These are additional information that can strengthen your submission as extra evidence of your business success.

Writing an award-winning entry is a rewarding process that allows you to reflect on your accomplishments and share your unique story. By following this guide, you can write a compelling submission that showcases your business and individual achievements and success story to enhance your chance of emerging as an award winner in the program.

Good luck, we look forward to celebrating your excellence at the Business Awards!

Enquiries For any further enquiries, please contact: businessawards@businessnsw.com