



## TOP TIPS FOR YOUR TOURISM AWARDS SUBMISSION



*We've put together some top tips from State and National judges, State and National winners and mentors, to help you prepare the best submission possible for the 2018 South Australian Tourism Awards.*



### GENERAL TIPS to help you prepare & write your submission

- **Remember the qualifying period** – ensure your answers relate to the qualifying period (1 July 2017 – 30 June 2018). It is acceptable to refer to results prior to this period only if it will assist you in the answering the criteria (e.g. comparing growth to previous years).
- **Plan ahead** – ensure you give yourself plenty of time to plan your answers and write your submission - don't leave it to the last week.
- **Follow the Rules for Entry** – or risk being penalised by the auditors.
- **Be tourism focussed** – you are entering the South Australian Tourism Awards so always refer to tourism related activities within your submission. The underlying consideration the impact your product/experience has on tourism.
- **Adhere to the word count** – you should be able to answer all the criteria questions in 10,500 – 12,500 words. If you have not written 10,500 words, it would be considered that you have not answered the questions sufficiently. However, remember you **must not exceed 12,500 words**.
- **Answer all questions** – failure to answer any question will automatically result in a score of 0 for that question. If you are unable to answer a question provide a reasonable explanation of why it cannot be answered. Remember that other nominees in your category may be faced with a similar problem and could answer in a positive response, thereby giving them a clearer advantage.
- **Make sure your submission flows logically** – to make it easier for the judges to read.
- **Explain graphs and charts** – and refer to them in the accompanying text to ensure they are contributing to the overall story of the submission.
- **Proof read, proof read, proof read** – and more importantly, ask someone else to proof read for you. Too many spelling and grammatical errors can potentially question the level of professionalism of the business.
- **Remember what judges are looking for** – that is, a financially sound business with a clear business and marketing plan. Judges look for businesses with demonstrated flair, innovation and passion who knows it's customers and has a service culture. The business needs to have contributed to tourism and have a substantiated commitment to sustainability.

- **Set the scene – use question 1a) to set the scene** for your submission and ensure you answer the eligibility requirement. Win the judges in this question – it should set the pace for PASSION and PERSONALITY. If you write in the first person i.e. from the 'I' or 'WE' point of view, make sure you introduce who you are at the beginning.
- **Do not assume local knowledge** – you must write to someone who doesn't know your community/region, your property or the services you offer. Judges at national level are almost certain NOT to know your business or your locale.
- **Include good, clear images** – to support and reinforce the point you are trying to make and to convey the spirit, essence and character of your business. Make sure to utilise the 5 images allocated for each question!
- **Are you accredited?** If so, you have already completed approximately half of your Awards submission. There is a direct alignment between some of the questions asked in the Tourism Awards and the SA Tourism Accreditation Program. Refer to the *Tourism Awards alignment with Tourism Accreditation* documents on our website. Ensure you also display your accreditation logo in your submission and relate it to your introduction.
- **Write your answers with passion and flair** – let your enthusiasm for your business shine through in your submission.
- **Use opening paragraphs** for each question to outline the answer then go on to answer in more depth. Use this opening paragraph to make your most important overall points about the policy or approach you take in your business.
- **Make your text interesting to read** – mix up long and short sentences and using punctuation for effect. Short, personal anecdotes and genuine examples of your 'uniqueness' always make a submission more interesting.
- **Keep your answers clear, informative, concise and relevant** – and let your passion shine through
- **Caption all images** – don't be boring with your captions and state the obvious e.g. Dining Room, use this as an opportunity to give your business personality.
- **Do not cut and paste** – if you are entering more than one category the questions will vary in each category. Make sure you read the questions and answer them in the context of the category you are entering.
- **Show proof** – substantiate your claims with items of proof such as examples, testimonials, pictures, examples etc.



## EXPERTS TOP TIPS for submission preparation

*We asked four of our most experienced experts involved in the Tourism Awards program for their top tips to prepare a winning submission. Here's what they had to say:*

- **Write rough notes (dot-point-style) under each question for your first draft** – get the information down first and then worry about how you say it.
- **Ensure you understand and answer all parts of the question** – as many questions have two distinct parts).
- **Make sure your answers flow and make sense** – if the judge marking your submission has to keep re-reading your answer to understand what you are saying, it will cost you marks. They don't have the time to be doing that!
- **Keep the content engaging and interesting** – make sure you tell your story.
- **Use great images** - they can often give more information than a paragraph of words (and will help keep the judge engaged!)
- **Allocate your word count** – we understand it's easy to talk about your product, but don't write 6,000 words on Question 1. You will probably have your 20 points for Question 1 by allocating around 2,500 words. The other questions are worth 20 points each too and many submissions will win or lose on how much time and energy is spent answering Questions 4 and 5.
- **Be clear in marketing descriptions** – target markets and existing customers may or may not be different.
- **Use tables** – can assist in providing structured responses and convey a lot of information in a few words.
- **Use photos to support and share your story** – and caption all photos and make them relevant to the appropriate text.
- **Use testimonials from a variety of feedback sources** – these sources can include customers and suppliers and/or partners – make sure they are applicable to the text (e.g. a testimonial from a happy customer where you've rectified a complaint in section 4d).
- **Be comprehensive** – If your business has several components (e.g. a tour, an office, a café etc.) make sure all parts of your application include statements about each component.



## SHOOTING FOR THE STARS – tips for national success

*The following suggestions have been provided by some of the Australian Tourism Awards judges on how to enhance or improve your submission at the national level.*

- **Tell your tale for an interstate reader** – even though you initially enter the South Australian Tourism Awards, remember that if successful, you could be contending that category and judged at national level, so it is important to set the scene. For example, if referring to the Coorong, you may need to explain what it is, where it is and why it is so important to tourism.
- **Show the judges where you are** – always include a map of location in Q1 a), so the judges know where you are located, in relation to both Adelaide and South Australia. Include drive times and kilometres.
- **Showcase your core business** – always ensure that you have entered the category that best reflects your core business.
- **Tailor your entries** – If entering more than one category, the entries must be significantly different and tailored to respond to the category entered. *\*Ensure you don't just 'copy and paste'*
- **Be clear and concise** – remember, answers to all questions should not be difficult to interpret.
- **Use examples and anecdotes** – these help to back up your statements where appropriate. Not only does it help the judge understand the point the entrant is trying to make, it helps to see the 'personality' and 'culture' of a business or operation.
- **Think from a judge's point of view** – skim reading can be common at a national level, with a number of submissions to be read in a short space of time. So, the more interesting the text, the more anecdotes and examples, the more attention will be paid to it.
- **Be unique** – personalise the submission as much as possible.
- **Pay attention to risk management** – The answers to risk management questions often focus too much on Work Health and Safety. Although this is an important factor to include, operators must identify the other risks associated with their business, at both a micro and macro level. For example, a major tourist attraction that did not count the unexpected closure of the attraction as a risk. And the operator, who never had anyone complain, therefore didn't think that a complaints strategy was necessary.