



2025

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS
BUSINESS EXCELLENCE
AWARDS

Nomination & Entry Guide



Welcome

On behalf of the Central Highlands Development Corporation (CHDC), I am delighted to invite you to participate in the seventh Central Highlands Business Excellence Awards.

The 2025 Awards are an opportunity to reflect on the remarkable achievements of businesses across the Central Highlands. From small enterprises taking their first steps to well-established industry leaders, every business has a unique story of perseverance, growth, and success. These Awards provide a platform to showcase and celebrate those stories.

The Awards also recognise the vital role our businesses play in shaping and sustaining the Central Highlands economy. Our region boasts a world-class coal mining sector, thriving agricultural and horticultural industries, an expanding tourism market, and essential health and education services. At the heart of each of these industries is a diverse range of dynamic small-to-medium enterprises.

The 2023 Awards achieved strong engagement from the community, with 143 nominations and 31 entries submitted by businesses. The public nominated a further 73 businesses for the People's Choice category, which in turn generated an impressive 5,700 votes.

Now, it's time for the next exciting chapter! Please join with us in the months ahead to again celebrate the businesses that make the Central Highlands a great place to live, work, and grow.



ASHLEIGH VANN
**Business
Facilitator**

BENEFITS *of Entering*

Entering the Central Highlands Business Excellence Awards is a valuable opportunity to showcase your business, gain recognition, and drive future success.

Key benefits of participating include:

- Celebrate your achievements
- Increase brand awareness
- Attract new customers and clients
- Strengthen team morale
- Receive valuable feedback
- Boost credibility and reputation
- Stand out in your industry
- Contribute to a thriving business community
- Enhance business planning and strategy

AWARD *Categories*

Agribusiness

Beauty, Health & Lifestyle

Emerging Business

Manufacturing, Construction & Trades

Mining Equipment, Technology & Services (METS)

Not-for-Profit

Professional & Business Services

Regional Corporate

Retail

Sole Trader

Tourism & Hospitality

AWARD *Categories*

Agribusiness

Highlighting the dedication and ingenuity of agribusinesses shaping the landscape of the Central Highlands, this category is open to primary producers that are actively cultivating, operating, or managing land. Including, but not limited to:

- Livestock
- Grain, pulses and fibre
- Fruit, vegetables and nuts

Beauty, Health & Lifestyle

Celebrating businesses dedicated to enhancing health, well-being, and quality of life. Including, but not limited to:

- Beauty salons, hairdressers, spas, or cosmetic service providers
- Fitness centres, gyms, yoga studios, or personal training businesses
- Health clinics, allied health providers, or alternative therapy practices
- Wellness coaches, mental health support services, or holistic practitioners

Emerging Business

Recognising businesses that have been operating for less than three years, this category celebrates those demonstrating steady growth and success without a pre-existing customer base and with a strong vision for the future.



Manufacturing, Construction & Trades

This award recognises businesses that excel in delivering high-quality products, services, and projects in the manufacturing, construction, and trades sectors. Including, but not limited to:

- Manufacturers producing goods, equipment, or materials
- Construction companies involved in residential, commercial, or infrastructure projects
- Trades businesses offering skilled services such as electrical, plumbing, carpentry, welding, or landscaping
- Innovators in construction technology, green building solutions, or advanced manufacturing techniques

Mining Equipment, Technology & Services (METS)

Recognises businesses that support the mining sector by supplying equipment, technology, and services. Including, but not limited to:

- Suppliers of mining equipment, machinery, or tools
 - Providers of technology solutions such as automation, data analytics, or software for mining
 - Engineering, design, or maintenance services supporting mining operations
 - Consultants or specialists offering expertise in areas like safety, environmental management, or logistics
 - Innovators focused on sustainability, reducing environmental impact, or improving operational efficiency in mining
-

Not-for-Profit



Honours organisations that make a significant impact on the community through their charitable, social, or environmental initiatives. Including, but not limited to:

- Not-for-profit (profit for purpose) organisations
- Social enterprises
- Community groups operating across all sectors

Professional & Business Services



Recognises businesses, across all sectors, that offer expertise, solutions, and/or support. Including, but not limited to:

- Legal, accounting, financial planning, or consulting firms
- Marketing, advertising, or public relations agencies
- IT and technology service providers or software developers
- Training providers
- Architecture, engineering, or design firms
- Photography and videography
- Creative services (graphic design and web design)

Regional Corporate

This award acknowledges the achievements of franchises, chains, or branches that have successfully adapted their corporate blueprint to the specific needs and characteristics of the Central Highlands region. Including, but not limited to:

- Branch operations
- Franchises
- Retail chains

Retail

This award celebrates businesses that excel in delivering exceptional retail services and experiences, meeting customer needs.

Sole Trader

Celebrates the outstanding achievements of self-employed individuals who own and operate their own businesses, recognising their dedication, innovation, and resilience as they navigate the challenges of running a business independently.

Tourism & Hospitality



This award recognises outstanding hospitality services and visitor experiences whilst showcasing the best of the Central Highlands. Including, but not limited to:

- Accommodation providers, such as hotels, motels, resorts, or eco-lodges
- Tour operators offering unique local experiences or adventures
- Restaurants, catering services, pubs, and cafés
- Event organisers creating festivals, markets, or other tourism attractions
- Businesses offering services that enhance the visitor experience, such as transport, guides, or curated packages

AWARD *Criteria*



Business Planning

Strategic and business planning is the structured process for developing and implementing long-term goals and objectives for the organisation. This criterion examines how you approach, execute, measure, and communicate strategic and business planning in your organisation.



Marketing Strategy

Marketing strategy is a long-term, forward looking approach to planning marketing activities within your business with the fundamental goal of achieving a sustainable competitive advantage.

This criterion explores how your business plans, manages, and monitors marketing activities and tactics.



Competitive Advantage

A competitive advantage is the differentiating factor that sets your business apart. Understanding and promoting your competitive advantage can result in outperforming your competitors.

This criterion asks you to explain how your business stands out from others in your market and how you communicate and monitor this.



Customer Centricity

Customer centricity is a business approach that prioritises understanding and meeting customer needs at every stage of the journey. By focusing on delivering value, personalised experiences, and strong relationships, businesses can enhance customer satisfaction, build loyalty, and drive long-term success.

This criterion requires you to demonstrate your commitment to customer satisfaction, including any initiatives you have in place to ensure quality and meet industry benchmarks.



Staff Development & Support

Staff development involves providing employees with training, learning opportunities, and career growth initiatives to enhance their skills and knowledge. Investing in staff development improves productivity, job satisfaction, and overall business success.

This criterion asks you to explain how you work to develop organisational culture, training and knowledge, and productivity for staff including yourself.



Innovation & Digital Presence

Innovation is defined as the multi-stage process whereby organisations transform ideas into new or improved products, services, or processes, to advance, compete and differentiate themselves successfully in their marketplace. It may include research and development activities.

This criterion asks you to explain how you have embraced innovation and digital presence to improve operations and stay competitive.



Sustainability

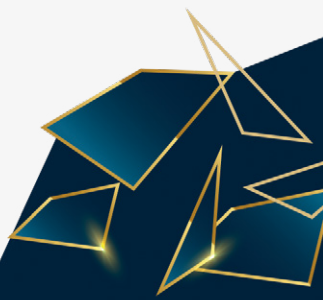
Sustainability is the commitment to operating a business in a way that supports long-term environmental, social, and economic well-being.

This criterion assesses how your business integrates sustainability into its operations, with a focus on environmental responsibility and community development.



Financial Viability

To ensure the integrity of the awards, businesses are asked to demonstrate financial viability through accountant verification of company's solvency (provided in strict confidence and not retained by CHDC post event). By receiving this documentation, judges can be assured that the business is in a financially viable position.



HALL of Fame

The Central Highlands Development Corporation Hall of Fame Award honours businesses that have demonstrated excellence in their field by winning a category award at three separate Central Highlands Business Excellence Awards. It represents outstanding achievement, consistency, and lasting impact within the business community.

Year	Business Name
2017	GeoRadar
2017	H.E.M.E
2019	Fair Dinkum Meats
2019	4t Consultants
2023	TNC Cranes
2023	Maraboon Vet



HOW *to Enter*

Whether you want to highlight a deserving organisation or showcase your own achievements, we invite you to take part in the 2025 Central Highlands Business Excellence Awards. Follow the steps below to participate:

Step 1: Nominate

- Nominations open on 3 March and close on 30 March.
- You can nominate a business (including your own) by clicking or scanning the QR code.
- This initial step is just a nomination registration—no detailed entry is required at this stage.



Step 2: CHDC Contact & Entry Form

- After nominations close, CHDC will contact all nominated businesses to confirm their participation.
- CHDC will provide a link to the official entry form.

Step 3: Complete & Submit Entry Form

- Businesses must complete the entry form and submit it online.
- The deadline for submission is 11:59 pm on 1 June.

Step 4: Finalists Announced

- All entries will be reviewed by the judging panel.
- Finalists will be officially announced on 4 July.

Step 5: Site Visits

- Judges will conduct site visits to finalist businesses from 28 to 30 July.
 - This allows businesses to showcase their operations, achievements, and excellence in their industry.
-



Winners will
be announced at
the Gala Dinner
6 September



IMPORTANT *Dates*

Stay ahead by marking these important dates in your diary for the 2025 Business Excellence Awards.

3
MARCH

Nominations Open

30
MARCH

Nominations Close

31
MARCH

Entries Open

1
JUNE

Entries Close

2
JUNE

People's Choice
Nominations Open

29
JUNE

People's Choice
Nominations Close

1
JULY

People's Choice
Voting Opens

4
JULY

Category Award
Finalists Announced

25
JULY

Gala Dinner Tickets
on Sale

28-30
JULY

Judges' Site Visits to
Category Finalists

3
AUGUST

People's Choice
Voting Closes

6
SEPTEMBER

Gala Dinner & Award
Presentations

WORKSHOP *Support*

To support you with your entry, CHDC is proud to bring a range of workshops to the region and link you with valuable online sessions. Visit chdc.com.au for the full list of events.

13

MARCH

AI & Tools for Business –
Emerald

19

MARCH

Part 1: Building Blocks
of ESG Webinar Series –
Online

20

MARCH

Marketing 101: CRM
and Marketing Tools for
Business Success – Online

26

MARCH

Part 2: Building Blocks
of ESG Webinar Series –
Online

27

MARCH

Meet Microsoft 365 –
Online

9

APRIL

Streamline your Business
with AI – Online

17

APRIL

Starting Out with Xero –
Online

29

APRIL

Exploring Facebook and
Instagram Advertising –
Online

30

APRIL

Mentoring for Growth
Workshop – Emerald

1

MAY

Mentoring for Growth
Sessions – Emerald

17

JUNE

Creating Content for
Social Media - Emerald

15

JULY

Finalists Workshop -
Low Stress Speaking –
Emerald

**FOR MORE WORKSHOP SUPPORT EVENTS
CLICK OR SCAN THE QR CODE**



JUDGING *Process*

A panel of independent business representatives from outside the region has been selected to ensure an impartial judging process.

The assessment process consists of two stages:

Stage 1 – Written Application

Each entry is thoroughly reviewed and scored by all three judges. While there is no fixed number of finalists per category, businesses must meet the required benchmark to advance to the next stage. Finalists will be announced on Friday 4 July.

Stage 2 – Judges' Site Visit

Finalist businesses will host site visits from the judging panel from 28 to 30 July. These visits provide an opportunity for businesses to showcase their operations, strategy, vision, and values. Each site visit will last no longer than 45 minutes.

JUDGING PANEL



**BEN
HUGHES**

Hughes et al



**DOMINIQUE
LAMB**

**Queensland
Small Business
Commission**



**JENNIFER
MCGUIRE**

AusIndustry

PEOPLE'S *Choice Award*

The People's Choice Award lets the community nominate and vote for their favourite local businesses. Entirely decided by the public, this award highlights businesses that have made a lasting impact on their customers and community, showcasing the winner's dedication, service, and excellence.

Key Dates:

2 June
Nominations Open

29 June
Nominations Close

1 July
Voting Opens

3 August
Voting Closes

Award Category Partner



PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD PROCESS:

Step 1: Nominate

- Nominations open on 2 June and close on 29 June.
- Show your support to a deserving business by clicking or scanning the QR code.



Step 2: CHDC Contact & Promotional Materials

- After nominations close, CHDC will contact all nominated businesses to confirm their participation.
- CHDC will provide promotional materials, including links and QR codes, to encourage public voting.

Step 3: Voting Period & Announcement

- Voting opens on 1 July and closes on 3 August. Cast your vote by clicking or scanning the QR code.
- Winner will be announced at the Gala Dinner 6 September.



Year	Business Name
2013	Route 66 Motor Inn
2015	M & R Colour Studio
2017	New Beginnings Personal Training
2019	Takarakka Bush Resort
2021	Country Allure
2023	Serenity Dental



ELIGIBILITY *and Conditions*

To be eligible to enter the Central Highlands 2025 Business Excellence Awards, you will be required to meet the following conditions of entry:

- The business must be a registered Central Highlands business and hold a valid Australian Business Number (ABN).
- Businesses and individuals can nominate or self-nominate. All entries must be submitted by Sunday 1 June at 11.59pm.
- All entries must be completed using the online entry form.
- You must submit a letter from your accountant stating that your business is in a financially viable position.
- Applicants can enter one or more of the listed categories. However, it is highly recommended that applicants enter a category where they can demonstrate a competitive edge. If the judges believe that an entry has been placed in an incorrect category, the judges reserve the right to transfer the submission into another category.
- Franchisees residing within the Central Highlands region are permitted to enter the Regional Integration category.
- Finalists and winners must participate in promotion associated with the Awards where necessary. This includes images which may be used on CHDC's websites, publications, social media or by other media and marketing channels.
- Information provided in the application will be treated as confidential and used solely for the purpose of judging the awards. Judges and organisers will be bound by confidentiality agreements.
- Judges reserve the right not to present an award if the circumstances do not warrant such an award. The decision of the judges is final, and no correspondence will be entered into.

For Disclaimer, Terms and Conditions and CHDC's Privacy Statement please visit chdc.com.au

EVENT Partners



PROUDLY DELIVERED BY



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PARTNERSHIP
OPPORTUNITIES, CLICK OR SCAN QR CODE**



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