



7. EXCELLENCE IN ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER TOURISM EXPERIENCE

This category recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism experiences that demonstrate authenticity and cultivate a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history, and traditions.

SCORING

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

- Written submission: 90 marks. The score for each question is highlighted below.
- Online review: 10 marks
- Business verification meeting: 0 marks (applies for first time entrants and those returning to the program after a break of more than two consecutive years)

Total score: ___/100 marks

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

- Respond to the following questions using maximum 10,000 words and 25 images. Please note that the COVID-19 Impact question 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 the:



COVID-19 Impacts (0 marks)

Please provide the judges with an understanding of your business's situation resulting from national and world events during the qualifying period. E.g., COVID-19, natural disasters (fire/flood).

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 only, allowing you to tell your business story in your written submission.

Bullet points are recommended. These responses should be short and sharp.

Q.1 Outline how many months of the qualifying period (1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022) you were operational for.

Q.2 Describe what the restrictions were on your business e.g., gatherings.

1. Introduction (15 marks)

A. Describe the nature and history of your tourism business as well as key features of your business plan. 4 marks

- Take the judge on a journey of your business product/service; how and when it began, where the business is located or services provided, who works in the business etc.*
- How has the business developed over time?*
- Describe the vision, mission and core values.*
- Provide an overview of the key features of your business plan, including main goals and strategies. This will assist the judge to understand how business development (Q2) and marketing efforts (Q3) align with the business's overall strategies.*

B. Provide an overview of your tourism products, experiences, and services available. 7 marks

- What products/experience/service are on offer to visitors?*
- Highlight your points of difference and what makes your business stand out from others (your unique selling points). Consider your amenities, products, services, or facilities that enhance visitor satisfaction.*
- 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.*

C. How does your business demonstrate tourism excellence? 4 marks

- Demonstrate your commitment to tourism excellence by explaining the values and philosophy of your business. This should be reflected in your policies and procedures, on how staff is inducted, incentivised and/or trained – so include details of these to show the business commitment to excellence.*
- How has the business been actively involved with and contributed to the tourism industry (locally, regionally, and nationally) through both business and personal participation?*
- Tourism excellence can also be demonstrated by listing any awards you have won and accreditations you hold.*

IMAGES

Attach a minimum of two graphics to support and enhance your responses. Include:

- a map of where you are located, judges may not be based in NSW and therefore won't be as familiar with NSW and our regions*
- images of the product/service and any specific facilities/amenities/services you have highlighted in your response*
- a collage of the accreditation programs you participate in and/or any award achievements.*

2. Business Development (20 marks)

A. During the qualifying period, what has your business implemented to improve the Aboriginal and Torres Island tourism visitor experience and/or to provide business recovery/resilience in the wake of national and world events? 8 marks

- This question seeks to understand how you have improved the product/experience/service within the qualifying period. Additionally, or alternatively, it seeks to understand what strategies were implemented for business endurance through another year of challenging national and world events.*
- To respond, consider any innovations and/or developments that were implemented or enhanced across the different areas of the business over this period. If many, include the most significant ones.*
- An innovation can be defined as "The process of introducing new or significantly improved goods or services and/or implementing new or significantly improved processes." (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics).*
- An enhancement could include, for example, a new experience or facility, updating point of sale processes to changing to ethically sourced supplies.*
- Actions that supported the ongoing survival of your business could include, for example, diversifying your product/experience, seeking alternative ways for the delivery of the experience/product/service, etc.*

B. Why were these innovation/developments implemented and how is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island culture embedded into these strategies? How does these align to the business's overall goals/strategies? 6 marks

- Explain the decision-making process and what drove the business to implement the innovations/developments mentioned in the previous answer. Consider how these enhance the visitor experience and/or supported business endurance.*
- The judges will be looking for an understanding of what prompted the innovations/developments e.g., was it a result of guest feedback, change in market demand, etc., or how it was anticipated to support business endurance in the current climate.*

- Your response should include the research and planning undertaken by the business to reach the decisions taken. For example: external research that was considered, past customers surveyed, etc.
- Ensure you include how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island culture was considered in the development and implementation of these improvements.
- Include how the innovations/developments align with your business main goals and strategies. Ensure your goals are specific so you can link it to the outcomes in the next question.

C. What was the outcome/s of these innovations/developments? 6 marks

- Outline what measures you have in place to track the success of these innovations/developments.
- Judges are looking for qualitative and quantifiable data that demonstrates what the expected outcomes of the innovations/developments were, and whether these were achieved.
- If the anticipated outcomes were not reached, acknowledge this, and provide the judge with insight as to why. How did the business respond?
- If the outcomes are still pending, provide what data is available and what the forecasted results may be.

IMAGES

- Attach a minimum of two 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.

3. Marketing (10 marks)

A. Describe the marketing strategies used to differentiate your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island tourism experience and to connect with your target markets during the qualifying period. 7 marks

- This question is looking for a clear understanding of how your business markets to your target market/s.
- 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. E.g. what research have you conducted or used to determine your target customer?
- You should provide a clear overview of the innovative approaches taken to marketing and what has been done differently to attract customers within the qualifying period. Consider for example, social media, digital or interactive advertising, apps, product packaging, tactical or paid advertising campaigns, packaging initiatives, relationship marketing.
- Outline how these strategies differentiated your product/experience from others.

B. What was the result of these marketing strategies? 3 marks

- Detail how these marketing activities have been successful. Use metrics to measure the outcomes and consider media coverage, social media engagement, increased web traffic, increased bookings etc.

Images

- Attach a minimum of two graphics to support and enhance your response. For example, images of marketing placement (social media screen shots, website, advertisements).

4. Customer Experience (15 marks)

A. How do you work to consistently deliver memorable and authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island tourism experiences? 7 marks

- This question requires you to outline the practices you have put in place to ensure the delivery of high quality authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Tourism experiences throughout the visitor experience journey.
- For those businesses that had significant disruption during the qualifying period, consider how you provide quality customer experiences in the alternative ways in which you operated, such as communicating to customers during changing restrictions, kept customers informed during closers etc.,
- Outline how you are committed to quality customer service throughout all areas of the business. This could include staff training, service principles and policies, staff reward systems etc.
- Consider all points of customer engagement e.g., email, phone, guest greetings/welcome and interaction during and after the experience.
- Once you have provided an overview of how customer service is delivered, describe how your business monitors and assesses customer service to ensure continued quality delivery. For example, feedback forms, monitoring social media, blogs, mystery shoppers etc.
- Ensure that you incorporate the ways in which you deliver an authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island tourism experience as a part of your visitor experience.

B. Describe the inclusive practices you integrate across your business. 4 marks

- As a part of your delivery of quality customer experiences you need to demonstrate how you consider visitors' special and specific needs and recognise 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.
- Provide examples of how you catered for customers with specific needs, explain the outcome or successes. Provide a case study.
- Refer to your target markets – consider each market and what specific requirements you offer to those guests.

C. What processes does your business have in place to communicate with guests pre and post visit? 4 marks

- This question requires you to outline the practices you have put in place to ensure the delivery of high-quality customer service post the experience.
- This could be EDMs of upcoming events or specials, responding to feedback, or personalised emails, etc.
- Consider how you actively encourage feedback and how feedback is used to improve the customer experience. Provide a case study/example where you have implemented a change based on customer feedback and/or testimonials which further demonstrate outcomes of quality customer experiences.

NOTE: Ensure that your response is relevant to the qualifying period.

IMAGES

- Attach a minimum of two graphics to support and enhance your response. For example, staff communications posters, flow charts of customer service processes, reception cards encouraging feedback.

5. Heritage and Culture (30 marks)

A. Demonstrate how you educate visitors and communities about the need to preserve our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island heritage and enjoy it respectfully. 10 marks

- Judges are looking for leadership in education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island culture. Therefore, you need to outline how you share knowledge and awareness of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island heritage. Consider for example, education programs, communication systems and activity programs delivered throughout the visitor experience (pre/during/post).
- Consider all the ways in which awareness and education are delivered to visitors and communities about the importance of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island culture. For example, onsite communications/signage, staff training and development, education programs.
- Demonstrate what the outcomes of these activities were and how you have influenced visitors through activities which foster responsible use and enjoyment of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island heritage.

B. Demonstrate how the business' work has contributed to the promotion and advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. 10 marks

- Describe how you work with various stakeholder groups such as governments, communities, stakeholders, travellers, and other industries to exchange information and develop a shared plan for the advancement of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island culture.
- Demonstrate how the business respects the rights and values of host and local communities, property owners and Aboriginal peoples.

C. Demonstrate how the business generates/stimulates tourism, employment, and economic activity in the host Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island community. 10 marks

- The judges are looking to understand the positive impact you have made to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities through the visitor product/experience/service.
- You should demonstrate the direct benefit to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island community in which your business represents/engages/interacts with. Consider the employment opportunities, economic stimulus, awareness generated. Your response should consider how the business optimizes long-term benefits to the community.
- When demonstrating how you support the local economy it is recommended that this be presented as a percentage of total contribution. E.g., '75% of all our supplies are sourced from the host Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island community.'
- To demonstrate employment opportunities, you could consider activities such as mentoring, education, training, and career development opportunities that you make available to the host Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island community.

IMAGES

- Attach a minimum of two graphics to support and enhance your responses.