



BUSINESS
EXCELLENCE
AWARDS 2024

Application Guide

Welcome

The Toowoomba Chamber invites you to engage and participate in the Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards 2024.

The Toowoomba Region has a rich and diverse economy. An economy based on a range of industries, including mining and manufacturing industries, robust agricultural and horticultural industries, a growing hospitality and tourism market, a large health and wellness sector and a diverse and growing small business sector.

An economy led by our top five industries (by business count):

1. Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries
2. Construction
3. Rental, hiring and real estate services
4. Professional, scientific, and technical services
5. Transport, postal and warehousing.

An economy consisting of a vast array of over 16,000 businesses, with 62.6% non-employing sole traders, 35% with one to 19 employees, 2.3% with 20 to 199 employees and 0.1% with 200 plus employees.

The large and diverse business base is supported by places of natural and man-made beauty, including the Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport which connects us to the world and beyond; a community spirit second to none.

Hosted by the Toowoomba Chamber, the Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards 2024 are designed to celebrate the efforts and achievements of our diverse and dedicated business community and recognise their contribution, not only to economic vitality but to creating a strong, healthy, innovative, vibrant and nation leading regional community that is the Toowoomba Region.

Most importantly, the awards are about **EXCELLENCE**, *the quality of being outstanding or extremely good.*

About the BEA 2024

This year, the Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards 2024 are all about **EXCELLENCE**.

The application process includes a written application, judges' site visits and the production of a 1-minute video where applicants get to describe who they are and what their business is.

The Toowoomba Chamber will work in partnership with a range of representatives from business, industry, rural and resources sectors to deliver the Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards 2024.

The Business Excellence Awards aim to:

- showcase the diversity and dedication of the Toowoomba Region's business community;
- celebrate the efforts and achievements of local business;
- promote best practice in strategic business planning and delivery;
- recognise the contribution of local business, not only to economic vitality but to creating a strong, healthy, vibrant regional community; and
- honour **EXCELLENCE**.

Awards and Categories

Agriculture

Includes but not limited to businesses that are actively cultivating, operating, or managing land (e.g., livestock, dairy, poultry, fish, vegetables, and fruit) and other primary production, (e.g., growing, and felling timber plantations) or other agricultural support services (eg seed and grain testing, feedlots, or ag feed suppliers).

Arts and Culture

Includes but not limited to artists, musicians, writers, performers, museums, galleries, theatres, festivals, or events.

Best Regional Business

Any business that operates and services the Toowoomba region (Toowoomba and surrounds), while also servicing outside Toowoomba Regional Council local government boundaries. This greater region is not limited and could include state and national operations and servicing.

Community and Not for Profit

Any business registered as a not for profit, whether government and non-government funded and registered charities.

Gerry Doumany Export

Any business that is trading in goods and services from one country to another country. This may include exporting food (e.g. chocolate, beef, grain, wallpaper), art, or professional services.

Health and Wellbeing

Includes but not limited to professional coaches' mentors, personal trainers, gyms, health and allied health providers, wellness professionals, fitness coaches, beauty services, hairdressers, and other related businesses.

Hospitality – Food and Beverage

Includes wine bars, pubs, restaurants, catering and equipment services and food service providers.

Awards and Categories

Industry

Includes but is not limited to any business that transforms materials into new products through manufacturing, producing, processing, repairing, altering, recycling, storing, distributing, transferring, or treating of products or testing machinery or equipment.

Innovation and Technology

Any businesses with commercially available products or services that demonstrate innovation in biosciences and genetics, marketing and communication, sustainability initiatives, information technology, software, app and device development, advanced engineering and/or other manufactured goods.

Professional Services (Up to 10 Employees)

Any business whose core product is a service or experts rather than a manufactured product. Professional services include but is not limited to legal, accounting, life insurance, superannuation and financial asset investing to scientific research and management consulting, mortgage and insurance brokers, business broking, creative industries (PR, Graphic Design and Marketing), and human resources.

Professional Services (11 Plus Employees)

Any business whose core product is a service or experts rather than a manufactured product. Professional service includes but is not limited to legal, accounting, life insurance, superannuation and financial asset investing to scientific research and management consulting, mortgage and insurance brokers, business broking, creative industries (PR, Graphic Design and Marketing), and human resources.

Property Construction and Development

Any business involved in property construction and development includes builders, developers, architects, engineers, project managers, town planners, real estate agents, and subcontractors.

Awards and Categories

Retail

Any business who sells goods in shops or online to the public. Retail may include but not limited to electrical, electronic, whitegoods, floor coverings, furniture, hardware, motor vehicles, food and groceries, recreational goods and the like.

Tourism

Includes short term accommodation providers (hotels, motels, serviced apartments, caravan parks), transportation (e.g., airlines, car rental), travel facilitation and information (e.g., tour operators, travel agents, tourist information centres), and attractions and entertainment (e.g., heritage sites and theme, national, and wildlife parks), festivals, and events.

Businesswomen of the Year

Recognises businesswomen role models who demonstrate outstanding entrepreneurial spirit, business achievement and innovation, whilst providing inspiration and encouragement to other women in business.

Future Leader of the Year

Recognises young business leaders who demonstrate outstanding entrepreneurial spirit, strategic direction, and innovative ideas, whilst providing inspiration to a new generation of upcoming young businesspeople.

Nominations are sought from individuals 35 years of age and younger (at the time of the award nominations opening) and who have had significant success in their business.

Awards and Categories

Sole Trader of the Year

Recognises the very best sole trader/owner-operator of the year. The winner of this award will be selected by an independent judging panel. All applicants must have applied in one or more of the following categories:

- Agriculture
- Arts and Culture
- Best Regional Business
- Community and Not-For-Profit
- Gerry Doumany Export
- Health and Wellbeing
- Hospitality – Food and Beverage
- Industry
- Innovation and Technology
- Professional Services (Up to 10 Employees)
- Property, Construction and Development
- Retail
- Tourism.

The judges from each category may select any sole trader application, to be in the running for the Sole Trader of the Year Award.

Awards and Categories

Micro-Business of the Year

Recognises the very best micro-business (2-4 employees) of the year. The winner of this award will be selected by a completely independent judging panel. All applicants must have applied for one or more of the following categories:

- Agriculture
- Arts and Culture
- Best Regional Business
- Community and Not-For-Profit
- Gerry Doumany Export
- Health and Wellbeing
- Hospitality – Food and Beverage
- Industry
- Innovation and Technology
- Professional Services (Up to 10 Employees)
- Property, Construction and Development
- Retail
- Tourism.

The judges from each category may select any micro-business application, to be in the running for the Micro-Business of the Year Award.

Awards and Categories

Business of the Year

Recognises the very best from across our region. The winner of this most prestigious award will be selected by a completely independent judging panel. All winners from the below categories will be in the running for Business of The Year 2023:

- Agriculture
- Arts and Culture
- Best Regional Business
- Community and Not-For-Profit
- Gerry Doumany Export
- Health and Wellbeing
- Hospitality – Food and Beverage
- Industry
- Innovation and Technology
- Professional Services (Up to 10 Employees)
- Professional Services (11 Plus Employees)
- Property, Construction and Development
- Retail
- Tourism.

Toowoomba Chamber, Hall of Fame Inductee

Recognises long standing Toowoomba based businesses who have excelled in their industry along with their enduring contributions to the overall Toowoomba regional community. Businesses are nominated by the Toowoomba Chamber Board and are critically assessed by the board across all areas of the business and their commitment to engage with the economic vitality of our region. This award carries true prestige and all previous inductees still to this day continue to epitomise the values.

Applications

Applications Overview

- All applications are strictly confidential.
- All judges are required to sign a confidentiality agreement.
- All judges must declare any conflicts of interest.
- A minimum of two and maximum of three independent expert judges will be allocated to each category.
- All applications are to be lodged via the Toowoomba Chamber website.
- The judges from each category may select a sole-trader and micro-business application, to be in the running for the Sole-Trader of the Year Award and the Micro-Business of the Year Award.

Applications

Key Dates

EVENT	DATE
Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards Launch	Tuesday, 16 April 2024
Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards nominations open	Wednesday, 17 April 2024
Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards Applications open	Tuesday, 30 April 2024
Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards Nominations close	Tuesday, 9 July, 9 AM
Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards Applications close	Monday, 22 July, 9 AM
Judges Site Visits	19-23 August (<i>Judges MUST be available during this week to participate as a judge</i>)
CDI Pest Management Finalist Announcement Function	Wednesday, 2 October 2024
Wearing Memories Wine Merchant Red Carpet Aperitivos	Saturday, 19 October 2024
Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards Gala Dinner	19 October 2024
Totally Workwear Toowoomba Sponsors', Winners, and Judges Soiree	6 November 2024
Judges Feedback to Applicants	29 November 2024

Applications

Site Visits

The Judges' site visits 19-23 August 2024 give applicants the opportunity to showcase their businesses. When applying, applicants will be required to identify at least three, four-hour slots in preference for a site visit.

During the site visit, judges will want to see evidence of strategy, vision, and values coming to life in your business. All judges are to visit each applicant together to reduce disruption to the business. Site visits will be 45 minutes in duration.

Feedback Provided to Applicants

By 29 November 2024, the Toowoomba Chamber will provide all applicants with judges' feedback.

Applicant Assessment and Criteria

Assessment for the Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Award 2024 are outlined in Appendices as follows:

- Appendix A | Category Assessment Criteria
- Appendix B | Businesswomen of the Year
- Appendix C | Future Leader of the Year.

This year the process will follow a similar path to 2021, 2022, and 2023 with further refinements, to deliver a shorter and simpler application form followed by an onsite visit from the judging panel. This process has been chosen to ensure the best applicant wins rather than best writer.

Please note if the applicants' place of employment is not suitable for onsite visits, then the judges will book in an alternative interview location instead – either face-to-face, online, or over the phone.

Appendix A

JUDGING | CATEGORY ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

This assessment criteria relates to the following categories:

- Agriculture sponsored by **Mort&Co**
- Arts and Culture by **Empire Theatres**
- Best Regional Business sponsored by **Toowoomba Regional Council**
- Community and Not-For-Profit sponsored by **Southern Cross Austereo**
- Gerry Doumany Export Award sponsored by **Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise**
- Health and Wellbeing sponsored by **Bank of Queensland, Toowoomba, and Rangeville**
- Hospitality sponsored by **Blooming Gorgeous**
- Industry sponsored by **Russell Mineral Equipment**
- Innovation and Technology sponsored by **RSM Australia**
- Professional Services (Up to 10 Employees) sponsored by **TAFE Qld**
- Professional Services (11 Plus Employees) sponsored by **FX Technologies Toowoomba**
- Property, Construction, and Development sponsored by **Specialised Property Consulting**
- Retail sponsored by **JMK Retail**
- Tourism sponsored by **Excavation Equipment.**

The assessment breakdown for the Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards 2024 is as follows:

- written application | 40%;
- site visit and presentation from the applicant | 50%; and
- a video of the business | 10%.

Note: Judges will reduce applicant scores who exceed word length limits (300 words for each question) and video length limit (one minute).

The site visit will give you the opportunity to showcase your business. During the site visit, judges will want to see evidence of your strategy, vision, and values coming to life in the applicant's business. All judges are to visit each applicant together to reduce disruption to the business.

Appendix A (cont'd)

Assessment Criteria

Business Strategy

Business strategy is key to success. This section is about demonstrating a sound understanding of business goals and objectives including evidence of strategic direction, goal setting and the processes you have in place to achieve them.

In your application:

- attach a summary of your strategic plan or business plan (maximum two pages); or
- attached your one-page strategic plan; or
- write a summary of your strategic plan (300 words or less); or
- a combination of the above; and
- write or attach a graphic representation on how your business strategy was developed.

During the site visit, judges will ask questions like:

- How do you link your strategic plan or business strategy to day-to-day operations?
- How are your vision and values embedded in the organisation and communicated to the team?
- Describe what benefit your business has received from strategic planning and business planning?

Appendix A (cont'd)

Business Performance & Improvements

Successful businesses know what drives their economic engine and what they need to measure to ensure they are building a long-term sustainable and profitable business. Metrics are important to a business. It helps track how a business is performing and how it benchmarks itself.

In your application, in 300 words or less:

- outline the key financial indicators on how your business measures financial performance;
- outline how you measure customer relationships, customer retention, customer growth;
- outline other tools and measures you use to monitor performance;
- state what quality assurance processes and procedures you have in place; and
- outline how your business focuses on continuous improvement.

During the site visit, judges may ask questions like:

- Detail the financial management practices you have in place.
- Show us a graphical representation of financial performance which demonstrates profitability, liquidity, and sustainability of the business.
- Provide examples to demonstrate how you measure customer relationships, customer retention, customer growth.
- Show us how your quality assurance processes work in practice.
- How does your continuous improvement process integrate into your day-to-day operations?

Note: In the past, some businesses have provided a letter from their accountant about financial performance and sustainability.

Appendix A (cont'd)

People Management and Development

People are the central component of all businesses. How businesses manage this important resource and the initiatives they put in place to ensure the development and professional progression of their staff is a critical component of excellence in business.

In your application, in 300 words or less:

- describe people practices your business has in place for the life span of an employee – from hire until they leave the business;
- outline key elements of your attraction and retention strategies;
- illustrate how you onboard new employees;
- describe your training and development programs;
- highlight your inclusion and diversity policies and practices;
- outline how you focus on workplace culture and staff engagement and staff wellbeing; and
- explain your leadership model and leadership investment.

During the site visit, judges may ask questions like:

- Demonstrate how your attraction and retention strategies work.
- Walk me through how you would onboard me to your business.
- How to develop individual training and development programs for employees?
- How do you actively seek to achieve your inclusion and diversity policy outcomes?
- How are you developing your workforce culture?
- How do you engage with your staff?
- How is your workplace wellness program implemented?
- What does your investment in your leaders and team include?

Note: Sole Traders who choose not to complete this section will receive an automatic 3/5 score.

Appendix A (cont'd)

Customer & Market Focus

Businesses need to understand who their customers are, how to attract them, what their needs are and how to retain/create loyal customers from them.

In your application, in less than 300 words:

- attach a summary of your marketing/promotional strategy (maximum two pages); or
- write a summary of your marketing/promotional strategy (300 words or less); and
- attached a summary of your customer service strategy (maximum two pages);
- outline your approach to attracting and retaining customers; and
- identify how you identify your targets market and customer needs.

During the site visit, judges may ask questions like:

- Demonstrate how you implement your marketing/promotional strategy across your business?
- What gives you, your competitive advantage?
- What is unique value proposition that makes customers need your product and/or service?
- Show us how your customer service strategy works in practice?
- How do you keep abreast of your target market and customer needs and levels of satisfaction.

Community Engagement and Activities

A key component of excellence is engagement with and support of the broader Toowoomba community. The Toowoomba business community has a legacy of engaging and giving back to the community including volunteering, sponsoring local charities and interest groups, and holding events to support and contribute to the development of the local community.

In your application, in 300 words or less:

- describe how your business engages with and helps to support the broader community;
- identify what local community support (in-kind, financial etc.) your provide; and
- outline how you are involved in developing the local community.

Appendix A (cont'd)

Community Engagement and Activities (cont'd)

During the site visit, judges may ask questions like:

- How does the business engage with and helps the broader community?
- How did you go about choosing where and who to give back to?
- What types of specific activities are you in?

Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Resilience

Innovation, entrepreneurship, and resilience enable businesses to respond to challenges, capitalise on opportunities, adapt quickly, create efficiencies, and lead to long term growth and sustainability. Excellence in business does not necessarily mean being immune to the impact of the business environment, rather it is about the business' ability to face and recover from adversity and the agility to change and adapt when needed.

In your application, in 300 words or less:

- outline your innovative practices implemented to drive success;
- outline your entrepreneurship applied to your business; and
- outline the measures your business has in place to be resilient in the changing business environment.

During the site visit, judges may ask questions like:

- Show us an innovation that drove business success?
- Show us how you face challenges, learn from failures, and adapt to changing market conditions, to achieve a goal.
- Describe a challenge(s) your business has faced that resulted in developing new or applying measures to make your business more resilient.
- Outline your expected businesses changes in the medium to long-term and what you have in place to limit impact on operations and achieve overall net benefits.
- Talk us through any unintended outcomes from the changes – positive and negative?

Appendix A (cont'd)

Business Summary Video

Applicants are afforded the opportunity to sell their 'business excellence' by highlighting how their business displays and delivers excellence.

In your one-minute video pitch, did you describe:

- who you are;
- what your business does; and
- why you believe you are an excellent and an award-winning business?

Note: All finalists will be offered the opportunity to complete a new video for the Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards 2024 Gala Awards Dinner.

Appendix B

BUSINESSWOMEN OF THE YEAR ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

This award recognises women business leaders who demonstrate outstanding entrepreneurial spirit, strategic direction, and innovative ideas, whilst providing inspiration to all businesspeople.

Nominations are sought from individuals who have had significant success in business.

The Businesswomen of the Year assessment process consists of three parts:

- written application – 25% of the assessment;
- an interview – 50% of the assessment; and
- a one-minute video – 25% of the assessment.

Judges may seek further information or clarification from any applicant or referee, at their discretion. This may be in the form of further written information or verbal contact. All interviews will be held at the Toowoomba Chamber office.

Note: Judges have been advised that they should reduce applicant scores who exceed word and video limits length limits.

Submission Requirements/Interview Tips

A Businesswomen of the Year demonstrates their contribution to the business community. They will show the necessary skills and characteristics required to successfully lead a workforce or team of the future.

While setting a vision and executing a strategy is expected from a leader today, achieving these company goals also relies on the ability to motivate, communicate, and inspire a workforce (Think Big, 2023).

Appendix B (cont'd)

Submission Requirements/Interview Tips (cont'd)

In your application:

- submit a current resume (maximum two pages) and one referee that can be contacted
- outline your most significant business achievement to date and what you did to achieve the result
- outline your greatest challenge as a businesswoman and how you dealt with that challenge
- detail your approach to leadership, diversity, sustainability, and inclusion, and how it influences your actions and activities in business
- describe what you do for ongoing personal development and how you plan for it
- describe how your lead
- outline how you balance your personal life with your work life
- present what you have done to make a positive impact on the community
- profile how you have contributed to the Toowoomba business community.

Businesswomen of the Year Summary Video

Applicants are afforded the opportunity to sell themselves by highlighting their characteristics and skills, demonstrating why they should be businesswomen of the year.

Did your one-minute video pitch, describe:

- who you are;
- what you do; and
- why you believe you are the Businesswomen of the Year 2024.

Note: All finalists will be offered the opportunity to complete a new video for the Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards 2024 Gala Awards Dinner.

Appendix C

FUTURE LEADER OF THE YEAR ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

This award recognises young business leaders who demonstrate outstanding entrepreneurial spirit, strategic direction, and innovative ideas, whilst providing inspiration to a new generation of upcoming young businesspeople.

Nominations are sought from individuals who are 35 years and under (at the time of award nomination opening) and who have had significant success in business.

The Future Leader of the Year assessment process consists of three parts:

- written application – 25% of the assessment;
- an interview – 50% of the assessment; and
- a one-minute video – 25% of the assessment.

Judges may seek further information or clarification from any applicant or referee, at their discretion. This may be in the form of further written information or verbal contact. All interviews will be held at the Toowoomba Chamber office.

Note: Judges have been advised that they should reduce applicant scores who exceed word and video limits length limits.

Submission Requirements/Interview Tips

A future leader embodies the necessary skills and characteristics required to successfully lead a workforce or team of the future. While setting a vision and executing a strategy is expected from a leader today, achieving these company goals also relies on the ability to motivate, communicate, and inspire a workforce (Think Big, 2023).

Appendix C (cont'd)

Submission Requirements/Interview Tips (cont'd)

In your application:

- submit a current resume (maximum two pages) and one referee that can be contacted;
- describe what professional and personal success means to you;
- outline your most significant career or personal achievement to date;
- illustrate your five-year plan for yourself;
- make clear the obstacles you have faced as a young business leader and how you have dealt with each of those challenges;
- detail your approach to leadership, diversity and inclusion, and how it influences your actions and activities within the company;
- highlight initiatives that you have developed as a leader in your business, detailing your success;
- describe your leadership style, what makes a good leader and any areas you need to work on in terms of your personal leadership style;
- outline how your leadership positively impacted on resolving a matter in your business, workplace and or community;
- present your contribution, interests and involvement in the community;
- profile how you have contributed to the Toowoomba business community, including the period, amount, nature, and level of the contribution; and
- articulate why you should be Future Leader of the Year 2024.

Future Leader of the Year Summary Video

Applicants are afforded the opportunity to sell themselves by highlighting how they have the characteristics and skills to lead Toowoomba's future.

Did your one-minute video pitch describe:

- who you are;
- what you do; and
- why you believe you are the Future Leader of the Year 2024.

Note: All finalists will be offered the opportunity to complete a new video for the Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards 2024 Gala Awards Dinner.