



BUSINESS  
**E/CELLENCE**  
AWARDS **2025**

# APPLICATION GUIDE



## WELCOME

The Toowoomba Chamber invites you to engage and participate in the **Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards 2025**, celebrating 125 years of business **EXCELLENCE**.

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.

We are an entrepreneurial city. A small business city that is the backbone of the Toowoomba regional economy. We have over 17,000 businesses, consisting of 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.

The **Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards 2025**, hosted by the Toowoomba Chamber, 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 LITTLE PIG CONSULTING BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2025

This year, the **Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards 2025** are all about EXCELLENCE, mixed in with some Glitz, Glamour, and Greatness.

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 2025**.

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 or 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.

### 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.





## AWARDS AND CATEGORIES

### 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

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.

### 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.

### 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.



## AWARDS AND CATEGORIES

### Young Professional 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.

This category is for individuals 35 years of age and younger (at the time of the award nominations opening) and who have had significant success in their business.



### 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
- 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
- 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.



### 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 categories below will be in the running for Business of the Year 2025:

- 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
- 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 a 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 from their Award category to be in the running for the Sole-Trader of the Year Award and the Micro-Business of the Year Award.

### Key Dates

EVENT	DATE
Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards Launch	5 June 2025
Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards nominations open	6 June 2025
Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards applications open	1 July 2025
Applications Writing Workshop	8 July 2025
Application Writing Workshop	10 July 2025
Free Cyber Security Workshop presented by CBA	31 July 2025
Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards nominations close	4 August 2025
Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards applications close	1 September 2025 at 9.00am
Judges Site Visits	15-18 September 2025 (Judges <b>MUST</b> be available during this week to participate as a judge)
All Star Brokers Finalist Announcement Function	8 October 2025
Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards Gala Dinner	1 November 2025
People First Bank Sponsors, Winners, and Judges Soiree	12 November 2025
Judges' Feedback to Applicants	12 December 2025



## Application Writing Workshops

Two application writing workshops will be hosted by the Toowoomba Chamber to give applicants the opportunity to better understand the questions and portray the best version of business. This one-hour free workshop is, to learn the shortcuts, tips and tricks for writing the best application to wow the judges and enhance your Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards application.

The workshops will be run by **Anthony Holzwart**. Anthony has a long track record in assisting small to medium businesses improve performance and realise their full potential. His approach is straightforward and practical – do what matters most and, wherever possible, avoid the mistakes of others.

Throughout his career Anthony has coached businesses on how best to project their strengths in a persuasive and compelling manner. Whether this be in a selling environment; in applying for grants; or pursuing business awards, he has helped businesses effectively tell their story, communicate their differentiators and connect with their audiences to get results.

His past participation on numerous business awards and grant assessment panels has provided valuable insights on what resonates and what doesn't.

## CBA Cyber Security Workshops

For the first time, CBA will also be delivering a free workshop to all applicants. This comprehensive workshop is designed to equip businesses with the knowledge and tools to protect themselves against common scams and cyber threats. This workshop will cover essential topics such as identifying phishing attempts, securing sensitive data, and implementing robust cybersecurity measures.



## Site Visits

The Judges' site visits **15 – 18 September 2025** 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 12 December 2025, the Toowoomba Chamber will provide all applicants with judges' feedback.

## Applicant Assessment and Criteria

Assessment for the **Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Award 2025** are outlined in Appendices as follows:

- **Appendix A** | Category Assessment Criteria
- **Appendix B** | Businesswomen of the Year
- **Appendix C** | Young Professional of the Year

This year, the process will follow a similar path to 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024, with further refinement, 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 the best writer.

Please note that if the applicants' place of employment is not suitable for onsite visits, then the judges will book 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** sponsored by **The Empire**
- **Best Regional Business** sponsored by **Toowoomba Regional Council**
- **Businesswoman of the Year** sponsored by **The Chronicle**
- **Community and Not-For-Profit** sponsored by **Southern Cross Austereo**
- **Gerry Doumany Export Award** sponsored by **Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprises (TSBE)**
- **Hall of Fame** sponsored by the **Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce**
- **Health & Wellbeing** sponsored by **Power Tynan**
- **Hospitality** sponsored by **Harness Energy**
- **Industry** sponsored by **Bishopp Advertising**
- **Innovation & Technology** sponsored by **New Acland Coal**
- **Micro Business of the Year** sponsored by **Commonwealth Bank Australia**
- **Professional Services** sponsored by **Toowoomba Building and Renovation Centre**
- **Property Construction & Development** sponsored by **Ray White Commercial**
- **Retail** sponsored by **JMK Retail**
- **Sole Trader of the Year** sponsored by **Loan Market**
- **Tourism** sponsored by **Excavation Equipment**
- **Young Professional of the Year** sponsored by **Classic Recruitment and Human Resources**

*The assessment breakdown for the Business Excellence Awards 2025 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.

## 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 of 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.



## Assessment Criteria 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, and 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.***

## Assessment Criteria 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.***

## Assessment Criteria 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 target 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.

## Assessment Criteria cont'd

### 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.

#### ***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?



## Assessment Criteria cont'd

### 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?

## Assessment Criteria 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 2025 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:***

1. written application – 25% of the assessment;
2. an interview – 50% of the assessment; and
3. 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).

## BUSINESSWOMEN OF THE YEAR ASSESSMENT CRITERIA 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 2025.

***Note: All finalists will be offered the opportunity to complete a new video for the Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards 2025 Gala Awards Dinner.***



## APPENDIX C

### YOUNG PROFESSIONAL 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 Young Professional of the Year assessment process consists of three parts:***

1. written application – 25% of the assessment;
2. an interview – 50% of the assessment; and
3. 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.***

## YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR ASSESSMENT CRITERIA cont'd

### Submission Requirements/Interview Tips

A Young Professional 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).

#### ***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 Young Professional of the Year 2025.

## YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR ASSESSMENT CRITERIA cont'd

### Young Professional 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 Young Professional of the Year 2025.

***Note: All finalists will be offered the opportunity to complete a new video for the Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards 2025 Gala Awards Dinner.***

## GOLD PARTNERS



## SILVER PARTNERS



## BRONZE PARTNERS



THANK YOU TO ALL  
OUR **PARTNERS!**

