



BUSINESS
E/CELLENCE
AWARDS **2025**

JUDGE'S GUIDE



WELCOME

The Toowoomba Chamber invites you to engage and participate in the **Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards 2025**.

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, 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 Toowoomba Chamber, the Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards 2025 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.

JUDGING

Judging Overview

- All applications are strictly confidential.
- All judges are required to sign a confidentiality agreement.
- All judges must declare any conflicts of interest; partners of the awards in categories they are not judging.
- A minimum of two and a maximum of three independent expert judges will be allocated to each category.
- All applications and score cards will be provided to each judge via the online portal.
- Judges are required to use a portal to submit each application individual score card and feedback.
- In each category, there is to be a maximum of 4 finalists and only one winner.
- Judges are responsible for reviewing their scorecards and confirming the finalists and the winner.
- 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.
- There will be a nominated lead judge for each category who will be the primary point of contact for the Toowoomba Chamber for each category.
- Judges will be acknowledged at the 2025 Gala Awards Dinner; however, the category judged will not be disclosed.
- All judges **MUST** complete all site visits together, except under exceptional circumstances.
- All site visits are to be completed between **15-18 September** 2025, and judges **MUST** be available during this week to participate as a judge.

EVENT	DATE
Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards nominations open	6 June 2025
Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards applications open	1 July 2025
Judges' Expression of Interest	20 July 2025
Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards nominations close	4 August 2025
Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence applications close	1 September 2025 at 9.00 am
Written applications to be provided to judges for review	5 September 2025
Judges Briefing	8 September 2025
Judges Site Visits	15-18 September 2025 (<i>Judges MUST be available during this week to participate as a judge</i>)
Judges' feedback due via online portal	30 September 2025
Finalist Announcement Function	8 October 2025
Gala Awards Dinner	1 November 2025
Sponsors', Winners, and Judge Soiree	12 November 2025
Judges' Feedback to Applicants	12 December 2025

Judges Expression of Interest

In June, Expression of interest will be distributed to Toowoomba Chamber members. Expression of interest are to be submitted via online portal.

Applications Provided to Judges

On 5 September 2025, all individual entries in each category will be provided to the category judges.

Judges Briefing

On 8 September 2025, the Toowoomba Chamber will brief the judges on the judging process, what to expect, and will provide an opportunity for the judges to ask any questions.

Site Visits

The Judges' site visits on 15-18 September 2025 give applicants the opportunity to showcase their business. 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.

Judges Feedback Due

On 30 September 2025, all judges' assessments are to be submitted. Judges are required to provide considered and constructive written feedback to support applicants to continue to improve their business. Judges will be supported to deliberate, moderate and consolidate feedback where there may be differences of opinion.

Feedback may also be considered across categories. Constructive feedback includes:

- Timely, meaningful, and clear
- Goal oriented
- Future Focused
- Focused on the process, not the person/business
- Address challenges/issues as a future opportunity.

The judging will be overseen and coordinated by the Toowoomba Chamber.

Feedback Provided to Applicants

By **12 December 2025**, the Toowoomba Chamber will provide all applicants with judges' feedback.

Judges Event Tickets

To show our appreciation and gratitude to all judges will receive an invitation to the All Star Brokers Finalist Announcement Function, Little Pig Consulting Business Excellence Awards 2025, Gala Dinner, and People First Bank Sponsors, Winners and Judges Soiree.

Role of Lead Judge

The lead judge will be the primary point of contact for the Toowoomba Chamber for each category throughout the judging process.

The Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce will confirm with each lead judge the finalists and category winner once all scorecards have been received and scores independently audited.

The Toowoomba Chamber will confirm with each lead judge the finalists and category winner once all scorecards have been received and scores independently audited.

The Toowoomba Chamber will confirm with each lead judge an applicant (if any) they believe should be considered for Sole Trader or a Micro-Business of the Year from their category.

The independent panel of judges, appointed by the Toowoomba Chamber to determine who is Sole Trader of the Year, Micro Business of the Year and Little Pig Consulting of the Year, based on the category judge's scorecard and feedback may reach out to any lead judge for clarification to assist in their analysis and decision making.

Feedback Provided to Applicants

On **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 Awards 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 & 2024 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 the best writer.

Please note 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 **Empire Theatre**
- 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 Enterprises (TSBE)**
- Health & Wellbeing sponsored by **Power Tynan**
- Hospitality sponsored by **Harness Energy**
- Industry sponsored by **Bishopp Advertising**
- Innovation & Technology sponsored by **New Acland Coal**
- Professional Services sponsored by **Toowoomba Building and Renovation Centre**
- Property Construction & Development sponsored by **Ray White Commercial**
- Retail sponsored by **JMK Retail**
- Tourism sponsored by **Excavation Equipment**

The assessment breakdown for the Little Pig Consulting 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 | Judge Guidance

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 their written application, was there:

- A summary of the strategic plan or business plan (maximum two pages); or
- A one-page strategic plan; or
- A written summary of the strategic plan (300 words or less), or a combination of the above, and
- Written or graphic representation of how their business strategy was developed.

During the site visit, ask for :

- Evidence of their strategic or business planning within the business?
- Staff knowledge of what the values and vision of the business are?
- A description of their business strategy and how it is integrated through the business, culture and people.

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 their written application, was there:

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

Assessment Criteria cont'd

During the site visit, ask for:

- An explanation of at least 3 key elements of benchmarking and performance.
- How does the business act on its performance and improvement measures.
- Evidence of financial performance that demonstrates profitability, liquidity, and sustainability of the business.
- Examples to demonstrate how you measure customer relationships, customer retention, and customer growth.

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

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 are a critical component of excellence in business.

In their written application, was there:

- A description of people practices in place for the life span of an employee, from hire until they leave the business.
- An outline of key elements of your attraction and retention strategies.
- An illustration of how you onboard new employees.
- A description of training and development programs;
- An outline of inclusion and diversity policies and practices.
- An outline of how they focus on workplace culture and staff engagement, and staff wellbeing; and
- An explanation of their leadership model and leadership investment.

During the site visit:

- Ask for a description of how they support their people and build the culture they are striving for.
- Look for evidence of a thriving and happy workplace culture.
- Seek out how they use their attraction and retention strategies, diversity and development programs, and onboarding works.
- Look for evidence of staff engagement, staff investment and wellness.

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 their written application, was there:

- A summary of their marketing/promotional strategy (maximum two pages); or
- A written summary of their marketing/promotional strategy (300 words or less); and
- Attached a summary of their customer service strategy (maximum two pages).
- Their approach to attracting and retaining customers is outlined, and
- Identification of how they identify the target market and customer needs.

During the site visit:

- Ask for a description of their current customer and marketing strategies and challenges.
- Seek information on how they implement their marketing/promotional strategy across your business.
- Look for evidence of how well the applicant understands their customers.
- Seek to understand their unique value proposition that makes customers need your product and/or service.
- Check for measures to understand 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 their written application, was there:

- A description of how their business engages with and helps to support the broader community;
- An outline of what they do to support the local community (in-kind, financial, etc.); and
- An outline of how they are involved in developing the local community.

During the site visit :

- Ask for evidence of how they engage with and help the broader community.
- Get an understanding of how they determine how they go about choosing where and who to give back to.
- Evidence of community support and the types of specific activities they are involved 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 their written application, did they:

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

During the site visit :

- Seek evidence in the workplace of innovation that drove business success.
- Ask for an example of a challenge, learning from failures, and how they adapted to changing market conditions, to achieve a goal.
- Seek information on their expected businesses changes in the medium to long-term and what they have in place to limit impact on operations and achieve overall net benefits.
- Get them to talk about 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 their **one-minute** video pitch, did it describe:

- Who they are;
- What their business does, and
- Why do they believe you are an **EXCELLENT** and award-winning business?

After the site visit, did the video represent what you saw – the values, vision, practices, and culture of the 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 their application and interview, did they:

- Submit a current resume (maximum two pages) and one referee that can be contacted
- Outline their most significant business achievement to date and what they did to achieve the result
- Outline their greatest challenge as a businesswoman and how they dealt with that challenge
- Detail their approach to leadership, diversity, sustainability, and inclusion, and how it influences their actions and activities in business.
- Describe what they do for ongoing personal development and how they plan for it.
- Describe how they lead
- Outline how they balance their personal life with their work life.
- Present what they have done to make a positive impact on the community
- Profile how they 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 the businesswoman of the year.

Did their **one-minute** video pitch, describe:

- Who they are;
- What they do, and
- Why do they believe they 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 their application and interview, did they:

- Submit a current resume (maximum two pages) and one referee that can be contacted;
- Describe what professional and personal success means to them.
- Outline their most significant career or personal achievement to date;
- Illustrate their five-year plan for themselves;
- Make clear the obstacles they have faced as a young business leader and how they have dealt with each of those challenges;
- Detail their approach to leadership, diversity and inclusion, and how it influences their actions and activities within the company;
- Highlight initiatives that they have developed as a leader in your business, detailing their success;
- Describe their leadership style, what makes a good leader and any areas they need to work on in terms of their personal leadership style;
- Outline how their leadership positively impacted on resolving a matter in their business, workplace and or community;
- Present their contribution, interests and involvement in the community;
- Profile how they have contributed to the Toowoomba business community, including the period, amount, nature, and level of the contribution; and
- Articulate why they 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 they are;
- What they do, and
- Why do they believe they 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!**

